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LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN INTERCOLLEGIATE
FEMALE STUDENT ATHLETES: A CASE STUDY

by

Natalie Poole

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Major: Higher and Adult Education

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Abstract

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This study is focused on the process of leadership identity development through an in-depth analysis of the experiences of and influences on intercollegiate female student-athletes at a mid-south, mid-size university that participates in Division 1 collegiate athletics. Research was conducted within the theoretical framework of the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model authored by Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005). This study was interested in the degree to which the data upheld the presence of the four developmental influences of the LID model: 1) peer influences, 2) adult influences, 3) reflective learning, and 4) meaningful involvement.

Framed by an understanding of college student development, leadership development, intercollegiate athletics and leadership, and the description of leadership identity development, the qualitative research examined the influence of intercollegiate athletics on the leadership identity development of female student-athletes. The findings were derived from semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and photo elicitation. The key findings of this research are:

1. The relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athletes.
2. The four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning) affect the leadership identity development of the female intercollegiate athletes.
3. There are specific processes involved with being an intercollegiate athlete that contribute to the development of the leadership identity within the female student-athletes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Leadership is a quality that is desired by most. It is generally sought out amongst most groups or formal organizations where goals and objectives must be accomplished. In the world of intercollegiate athletics, such aspiration is no different. According to Northouse (2009), leadership can be defined as many things, such as a trait, an ability, a skill, a behavior, a relationship, and even an influence process. Yukl (2006) broadly defined leadership as influence processes affecting the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish the objectives, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. No matter how many times leadership is defined, or in what context, it is something that so many individuals and organizations yearn to have.

Our society demands individuals who display effective leadership qualities and is constantly seeking out those who embody the very definition of leader. In today's competitive workplace, there is more pressure to have qualities and traits that separate a college graduate from the next person, thus there has been a focus on the college student and their exposure to leadership. Research indicates that students can and do increase their leadership skills during their college years (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Today, many postsecondary institutions have leadership programs in place for students to become involved in and progress through while attaining a degree. There are increasingly more student organizations and co-curricular activities that create opportunities to aid in the development of students and their leadership skills (Astin & Astin, 2000). College can be a great environment whereby students are challenged to solve

complex problems and research solutions in the classroom. Students learn to manage conflict amongst their peers, as well as work amongst and direct their peers. They also have opportunities to develop mentor relationships with faculty, which can aid in positive leadership outcomes (Dugan & Komives, 2007). This kind of environment is typical of what student-athletes experience throughout their time in college. For example, a student-athlete must constantly work on adjusting their skill to get better, as well as help their teammates through the struggles of navigating through the challenges of learning new plays, incurring an injury, and adjusting to actual playing time and performance. In addition, they are expected to work on regrouping their team after a loss, analyze video on opponents, not to mention assessing their own performances, and have constant accountability to and responsibility for their teammates. While student-athletes are doing that, they are also full-time students who must make up or take in advance any exams and quizzes they will miss due to sport related travel. Because of these heroics, Enterprise Car Rentals is one of many companies that are known for targeting former college student-athletes for hire because of their ability to handle pressure situations in a competitive environment and juggle multiple responsibilities (Martini, 2012). As noted by Martini (2012), Vice President of Talent Acquisition with Enterprise, Marie Artim, stated “We see the skills that student athletes gain from their experience and know the value they can bring to our business” (para. 4).

In the environment of postsecondary intercollegiate athletics, leadership development is always a focus because in any specific game or competition, an athlete emerges as a leader and can motivate and organize teammates to play as a unified group (Weese & Nicholls, 1986). According to Jeff Janssen (2014) in his book *The Team Captain's Leadership Manual*, a leader exhibits characteristics such as composure, confidence, character, and are intrinsically motivated.

He goes on to say that they are also driven, show respect to others, and are capable of influencing others to work hard and be committed to their goals. Klonsky (1991) noted that regarding leadership traits, athlete leaders have been characterized by higher levels of dominance, ambition, competitiveness and responsibility. Moran and Weiss (2006) described a list of characteristic leadership traits with instrumentality traits (i.e., independent, make decisions easily, never gives up, energetic, competitive, self-confident and stands up well under pressure) and expressiveness traits (i.e., emotional, able to devote self completely to others, kind, understanding of others, gentle, helpful to others, aware of feelings of others and warm in relations with others).

There is always the need for good leadership, the expectation for better leadership, and the need to develop it. Just as college administrators are pressed to be good leaders, coaches, likewise, are expected to be leaders for their individual teams. Coaches who practice good leadership are fair, creative, open to new ideas, and are assertive. They are expected to motivate and refocus their athletes, as well. In addition to coaches having to be good leaders, there is a desire for each athletic program to display the presence of good leadership practices exhibited by each student-athlete. Such a display is important to the culture of any athletic program, and more specifically, each team. Loughhead and Hardy (2005) noted that not only is a coach's leadership central to the success of the team, but also that leadership provided by student-athletes can enhance a team's performance. Athletes who practice leadership have been shown to ensure high standards and high work ethic, to help the team handle adversity, to help develop better team chemistry, to help minimize and manage team conflict, to help the coach better understand the team's needs, and to help recruit players to the team (Dupuis et al., 2006; Janssen, 2014).

There are some student-athletes who naturally have many of the characteristics or traits commonly associated with being a good leader, however most do not. Many of these characteristics that make up their leadership identity are formed because of the influences that exist while they are student-athletes, as well as some of the experiences they have as student-athletes. Komives et al. (2005) conducted a grounded theory on developing a leadership identity, based on college students involved in co-curricular opportunities. This study found that developing a leadership identity was connected to the categories of developmental influences, developing self, group influences, students' changing view of self with others, and students' broadening view of leadership. As a result, Komives et al. (2006) developed the Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model that studies four influences that affect the development of a leader in an organization. These influences include: adult influence, peer influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. The intercollegiate athletic environment appears to parallel Komives et al.'s (2006) LID model, but we do not know if it can be applied specifically to intercollegiate student-athletes. It is also unclear whether competition or competitive drive, as well as the impact of the student-athlete's coaches, are also influences in their leadership identity development. By understanding the influences present in the leadership identity development of student-athletes, athletic department leadership programs can be developed to better assist leadership development within student-athletes. Such programs can be put together, shared, and then applied accordingly. This, in turn, can help create success within the individual athletic teams and ultimately the entire athletic department. It can also help prepare student-athletes for success in life after their athletic career is over, as well as gain access to more leadership positions. This study sought to explore the experiences of and influences on student-athlete's leadership identity development.

The Background of the Study

Leadership identity development is a multi-faceted process. There are connections between what has been researched related to identity development (Eriksen, 1959, 1980), social identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), identity and leadership development (Day & Lance, 2004; Lord & Hall, 2005), and leadership development within co-curricular opportunities (Kuh, 1991). Erikson (1959, 1980) looked at identity from a viewpoint of personality development, placing it in a psychosocial framework of self in society. Erikson (1959, 1980) stated that “identity connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others” (p. 109). He identified eight states of psychosocial development, and these stages are mostly related to the age of an individual. Eriksen (1959, 1980) found that individuals experienced a fifth stage of psychological development in which they will explore identities and roles before deciding on a meaningful self-concept of themselves. Chickering and Reisser (1993) developed a psychosocial theory that stated that students moved through seven vectors during identity development for college age students. The vectors include: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The seven vectors were developed to illustrate how a student’s development in college can affect them socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Chickering (1969) noted that changes that may occur in one student may not happen in another or at the same rate, which means that each student may move through each vector at their own rate.

So much of leader development has been connected to personal development and identity development. Day and Lance (2004) took researched ideas identifying that leaders developed as

their sub-identity became more complex and differentiated, as well as complex and then integrated. They also stated that effective leadership development is a combination of differentiation and integration of leadership and personal experiences, as well as values and confidence. Along those same lines, Lord and Hall (2005) explained leadership development as the process of improving the fit between an individual's personal identity and their leadership duties. They believed that as leaders develop their identities, they will move their focus from themselves to the group they are involved with. Kuh (1991) suggested that students who actively participated in co-curricular activities reported higher levels of leadership and communication skills. In addition, Kuh (1991) added that students participating in co-curricular activities were able to develop interpersonally and learn transferable skills.

There have even been a few studies relating intercollegiate athletics to leadership development. Ryan (1989) found that over the course of an athlete's college career, there is growth in their leadership skills. He argued that athletics contributes to development of interpersonal skills through various learning experiences such as cooperative group tasks and involvement with peers. Pascarella and Smart (1991) studied the relationship between leadership and intercollegiate athletic participation. The research findings suggested that athletes were significantly more likely than non-athletes to have more positive social self-esteem, including better leadership skills. Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, and Bostrom (1995) examined the relationship between the leader's behavior and group cohesion in intercollegiate team sports. Their findings indicated a strong relationship between high task association and group cohesion. Student-athletes are expected to function together on the field or court and rely on one another to be successful, so they must work to ensure the pieces all fit together. This requires problem solving, motivating others, effective communication, maintaining relationships, trust, and serving

others. This can create cohesion amongst a team. Soon after, Loughhead and Hardy (2005) found that leadership provided by players can enhance a team's performance. There is uniqueness to being a student-athlete participating in intercollegiate athletics. As a student-athlete, one is expected to problem solve during competition, as well as balance the academic demands of being a full-time student and an athlete. Student-athletes generate and maintain relationships with coaches and teammates, and at the same time, compete daily to be an impactful player. In addition, they have to overcome injury at times, while fighting for consistent playing time. They also must manage the pressure of being expected to win consistently, and behave in an appropriate manner always. This uniqueness is very demanding of time and responsibility. It can challenge a student-athlete as an individual to take on roles and responsibilities that cause a person's identity to grow and evolve, and many times take on a leadership identity. Underlying the belief of developing an identity as a "leader" lies a complex array of personal values, cognitive development, group norms, and perceived need to realize a particular vision (HERI, 1996; Komives, et al., 2004, 2005, 2006). Consequently, there needs to be a better understanding of what experiences and influences aid in their leadership identity development.

Statement of the Problem

A female develops differently than a man does, and each experience leadership in a different way. According to Evans (1995) female college students develop differently than male college students. Evans noted that women rate higher on the intimacy scale than males, and they also rate interpersonal relationships higher than males. Josselson (1987) has theorized on women's identity development, studying women at different stages of their lives. She placed a woman's identity in a social context, and recognizes different roles in their lives. Most research conducted on leadership has focused on the coach or the male athlete. There needs to be more

diverse research that includes the female leadership identity development, and more specifically the female student-athlete.

Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) developed the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model based on the leadership identity development of college students involved in co-curricular activities. Komives et al. (2005) identifies four influences that affected the development of a leader in an organization. They include: adult influence, peer influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. Komives' LID model has not specifically been applied to intercollegiate student-athletes. Therefore, there is little known as to whether Komives' LID model can be applied to the female student-athlete identity specifically.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of and influences on female student-athlete's leadership identity development. Gaining a better understanding of these experiences will clarified the significant influences that lead to leadership identity development. By exploring the possible influences on the leadership identity development of these female student-athletes, as well as their experiences, the study strove to gain a better understanding of the attributes, behaviors, and relational approaches of those individuals seen as leaders. The qualitative case study was conducted at a mid-south, mid-size university, and included female participants from Olympic sports. The results of this study could possibly add to the research that has already been done that shows how Komives' Leadership Identity Model can be applied to college students involved in co-curricular organizational involvement, including sororities and fraternities. Only this time, we learned the impact of Komives' model on female student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics.

Research Questions

The research questions that served as a guide for this study were: 1) How do the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athlete? 2) How do the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development? and 3) What are the processes of being a female student-athlete that contribute to this leadership identity development?

Significance of the Study

By studying the experiences of and influences on intercollegiate female student-athletes through a qualitative case study, a better understanding was gained of how their leadership identity develops. Charbonneau, Barling, and Keloway (2006) found that while coaches are seen as formal leaders, many fail to recognize the mostly informal development of leaders within a team. This study's outcome contributed to evidence based research related to leadership identity development in intercollegiate student-athletes. With this information, it helped clarify what influences impact a student-athlete's leadership identity development, as well as the specific experiences that impact a student-athlete's leadership identity development. In addition, this study's outcome could aid in the development of student-athlete's leadership programs within intercollegiate athletic programs. There are not many leadership programs within athletic departments currently, however, more athletic departments are hiring a life skills director to implement community service projects, life skills development, and leadership skill development within the student-athletes. The outcome of this study can influence what information is taught in those leadership programs, as well as how it is shared and applied.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study included the application of a grounded theory in student leadership identity development, research on the female identity, research on college student leadership and involvement in co-curricular activities, and student-athlete leadership in intercollegiate athletics. Understanding the importance of developing leadership within college age students, it is important to understand how the leadership identity develops. The student leadership development research for this study was based on the application of Komives et al. (2005) grounded theory on leadership identity. Komives et al.'s (2006) Leadership Identity Development (LID) model applies the grounded theory and illustrates how the categories of the theory change across the stages of the model. The five categories that influence the development of a leadership identity were: broadening view of leadership, developing self, group influences, developmental influences, and the changing view of self with others. The stages of the LID include: awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis. Individuals will move from one stage to the next in the process of developing their identity. Komives et al.'s (2006) Leadership Identity Development (LID) model also studies four influences that affect the development of a leader in an organization. These influences include: adult influence, peer influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. Komives focuses on college students and their relational skills in co-curricular activities, how those students develop identity by awareness of self and how they interact amongst a group of people. The theoretical framework for this study connected research findings that indicated that Komives' LID model, based on Komives et al. (2005) grounded theory of student leadership development, is likely to be applied to female intercollegiate student-athletes.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that people are familiar with intercollegiate athletics. The researcher also assumed that the participants were honest in their responses to the questions they were asked, and that they can reflect on their leadership experiences related to intercollegiate athletics. It is also assumed that by nature of the environment, sports participation can be a venue for leadership to be displayed. Lastly, it was assumed that the coaches of the respective sports were capable of recommending student-athletes that exhibit leadership qualities.

Limitations

This research study is qualitative in nature, which “is designed to reveal a target audience’s range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues” (QRCA, 2015, para. 1). Qualitative research is descriptive and includes in-depth studies of individuals or small groups of people to guide or support the building of hypotheses. This case study is no different in that it describes only the experience of female intercollegiate athletics and the leadership identity development of intercollegiate student-athletes enrolled at mid-south, mid-size public metropolitan university. This study does not factor in students that are not involved in intercollegiate athletics. There is more regulation of time placed on the student-athlete rather than the regular student. In addition, student-athletes may experience more opportunities for leadership than a normal student. This study also only focuses on the female student-athlete that participates in an Olympic sport in a Division 1 athletic program. Therefore, this information cannot be used for the purpose of generalizing to other college divisions such as NCAA Division II, III, NJCAA, or NAIA sports programs.

Delimitations

In this study, the researcher limited the scope to only one institution so that the variables could be reduced amongst the participants. The researcher only included participants that are female, play an Olympic sport, and were chosen by their coach as a student-athlete that exhibits leadership qualities. The researcher is focused on the leadership identity development of intercollegiate student-athletes through specific influences and their experiences. This study did not focus on whether leadership presence in intercollegiate student-athletes leads to more success in competition.

Definition of Terms

In this study, I described the experiences of female intercollegiate student-athletes from one university, and how their involvement in intercollegiate athletics contributed to the development of their leadership identity. The following definitions are provided for the purpose of this study specifically:

Athlete Leadership- an athlete occupying an informal or formal role on a team, who influences team members to achieve a common goal (Loughead et al., 2006);

Co-curricular Activities- Learning experiences that take place outside of classrooms, which contribute to a dynamic, complete student who can integrate functional relationships with his or her life;

Development- growth or progress;

Group Cohesion- a bond that pulls people toward membership in a particular group and resists separation from that group;

Identity- sense of self;

Intercollegiate Athletics- sport competition played at the collegiate level;

Relational Leadership- a relational process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be accomplished and how it needs to be done, and the process of facilitating individual and group efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2006);

Leadership Identity- created when an individual's view of self in relation to others shapes an individual's broadening view of what leadership is;

Non-Revenue Sports- those intercollegiate sports that do not generate large amounts of revenue within an intercollegiate athletic department, such as: Baseball, Cross Country, Golf, Rifle, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, and Track and Field;

Olympic Sports- non-revenue generating sports;

Social Identity- an individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to a certain social group together with emotional and value significance to that group membership (Tajfel, 1972);

Student-Athlete- a male or female varsity intercollegiate athlete who participates in an organized competitive sport sponsored by the educational institution in which he or she is enrolled. Student-athletes must typically balance the roles of being a full-time student and a full-time athlete;

Team Sport- Sports in which a group of student-athletes work directly together as a squad to compete against a group of student-athletes from another institution. (Mull, Bayless, Ross, and Jamieson, 1987)

Study Overview

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and background to the study of leadership identity development in female intercollegiate student-athletes. In addition, it covered the statement of the problem, purpose statement, and the research questions that will guide the study. Chapter 1 also included the theoretical framework, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and definition of

terms, which have set the stage for the chapters that will follow. A comprehensive review of related literature will be covered in Chapter 2. The literature will cover the following areas: identity development, identity and leadership development, leadership development with co-curricular involvement, leadership and intercollegiate athletics, and relational leadership.

Chapter 3 will present a description of the research design, detailing information on the participants and methods used to gather and analyze the data. Chapter 4 provides detailed descriptions of each of the research participants, while Chapter 5 presents the findings from the study. Chapter 6 provides discussion, the conclusion, and implications for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

There are connections between what has been researched related to identity development (Eriksen, 1959, 1980), social identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), identity and leadership development (Day & Lance, 2004; Lord & Hall, 2005), and leadership development within co-curricular opportunities (Kuh, 1991). However, there is minimal research on how leadership develops or how a leadership identity develops over time (Komives, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2004). Research findings related to specific co-curricular experiences and leadership development and aspects of relational leadership may be equally valuable in laying the foundation for scholarly research and applications for student affairs practitioners (Komives et al., 2004). The importance of athletic participation and the benefits derived by a student-athlete while participating in college sporting events should be understood by those interested in higher education and college sports (Zimbalist, 1999). The focus of this review of this literature was to provide clarity on the concept of leadership identity development and how it can apply to female intercollegiate student-athletes, by covering theories on identity and student development, discussing how theories impact leadership development and reviewing research leadership literature concerning college students including the impact of participating in intercollegiate athletics.

Identity Development

Establishing a sense of identity is a central task in human development (Erikson, 1959, 1980). Identity has been defined many times and from many different researched perspectives. Widick, Knefelkamp, and Parker (1978) noted that establishing an identity involved a combination of childhood self-images with present self-evaluation and future ideals. Josselson

(1987) defined identity as how individuals make sense of what they experience and how they communicate their meaning systems to other individuals. Major theories of identity development are mostly based on the works of Erikson (1959, 1980). Erikson (1959, 1980) looked at identity from a viewpoint of personality development, placing it in a psychosocial framework of self in society. Erikson (1959, 1980) stated that “identity connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others” (p. 109). He identified eight states of psychosocial development, and these stages are mostly related to the age of an individual. These stages include: trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, ego identity vs. role confusion, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and ego integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1959, 1980). To progress from one stage to the next, an individual must successfully complete the previous. At each developmental stage, the individual will face a crisis that must be overcome for them to move forward to the next developmental stage. The crisis “is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential” (Erikson, 1968, p. 96). Adolescence is the period Erikson noted there was the most identity development within individuals, which means that college age students are focusing on self-identity development. These students are examining self, clarifying what their beliefs and values are. Erickson (1959, 1980) also noted that during this stage, students are exploring varying roles and identities before deciding on a solid self-concept as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Development

Stage (age)	Psycho-social Dialectic	Primary Activity	Significant Relationships	Favorable Outcome
0 to 1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Consistent stable care from parents	Main Care-giver	Trust and optimism
2 to 3	Autonomy vs. Doubt	Consistent stable care from parents	Parents	Sense of autonomy and self-esteem
4 to 5	Initiative vs. Guilt	Environmental exploration	Basic family	Self-direction and purpose
6 to puberty	Industry vs. Inferiority	Knowledge acquisition	Family, neighbors, and school	Sense of competence and achievement
Adolescence	Identity vs. Confusion	Coherent vocation and personality	Peers, in- and out-groups	Integrated self-image
Early Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Deep and lasting relationships	Friends and lovers; competition and cooperation	Ability to experience love and commitment
Middle Adulthood	Generativity vs. Self-absorption	Productive and creative engagement in society	Divided labor and shared household responsibilities	Concern for family, society and future generations
Late Adulthood	Integrity vs. Despair	Life review and evaluation	Humankind and extended family	Sense of satisfaction; acceptance of death

Note. Adaptation of Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Development. Erikson, E.H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York, NY: International Universities.

With Erikson viewing development in stages, it places the growth in a fixed, age-classified sequence, which a person moves through more from internal cues rather than any external factors. There are also timing models that are used to show development of individuals. These timing models suggest that development occurs because of personal or environmental events take place in a person's life (Giele, 1982). This type of model can cause stress if a person

does not have significant events occur at the expected times in their lives. Timing models are criticized as they emerged in the 1950s during a time where life was more stable and predictable than it is today.

Other researchers have viewed identity in a different context. For example, Deaux (1993) viewed identity as multidimensional. Her concept of identity was defined internally by self and externally by others. She also noted that social and personal identities are interrelated. The social identities are membership categories or roles that a person claims, such as Latino or Latina. Personal identities label traits and behaviors that an individual view's as self-descriptive, such as kind or responsible. Tajfel (1972) introduced socially identity to theorize how individuals conceptualize themselves in intragroup contexts. He describes how a system of social categories can define how an individual finds their own place in society. Tajfel (1972) defined social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (p. 292). This definition can be used to link participation of intercollegiate athletics and social identity. Cantor and Prentice (1996) claimed that the athletic environment could provide students with a social identity, with clarity about themselves and their place at their institution, and membership in a valued social group. Intercollegiate athletes have a bond between them as they all face similar difficulties and achievements. They also may be around others who have experienced similar predicaments, so they can get guidance from one another socially.

Jones and McEwen (2000) developed a conceptual model of a multidimensional identity. The model evolved from a grounded theory study, which involved a group of 10 women college students that represented diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds and ranged in age from 20-24. This model identifies a core sense of self, or what one might view as a personal identity. There are

intersecting circles surrounding this core identity that represent significant dimensions of the personal identity, such as: race, sexual orientation, and religion. There are other intersecting circles that involve contextual influences such as family background, current experiences, sociocultural conditions, career decisions, and life planning.

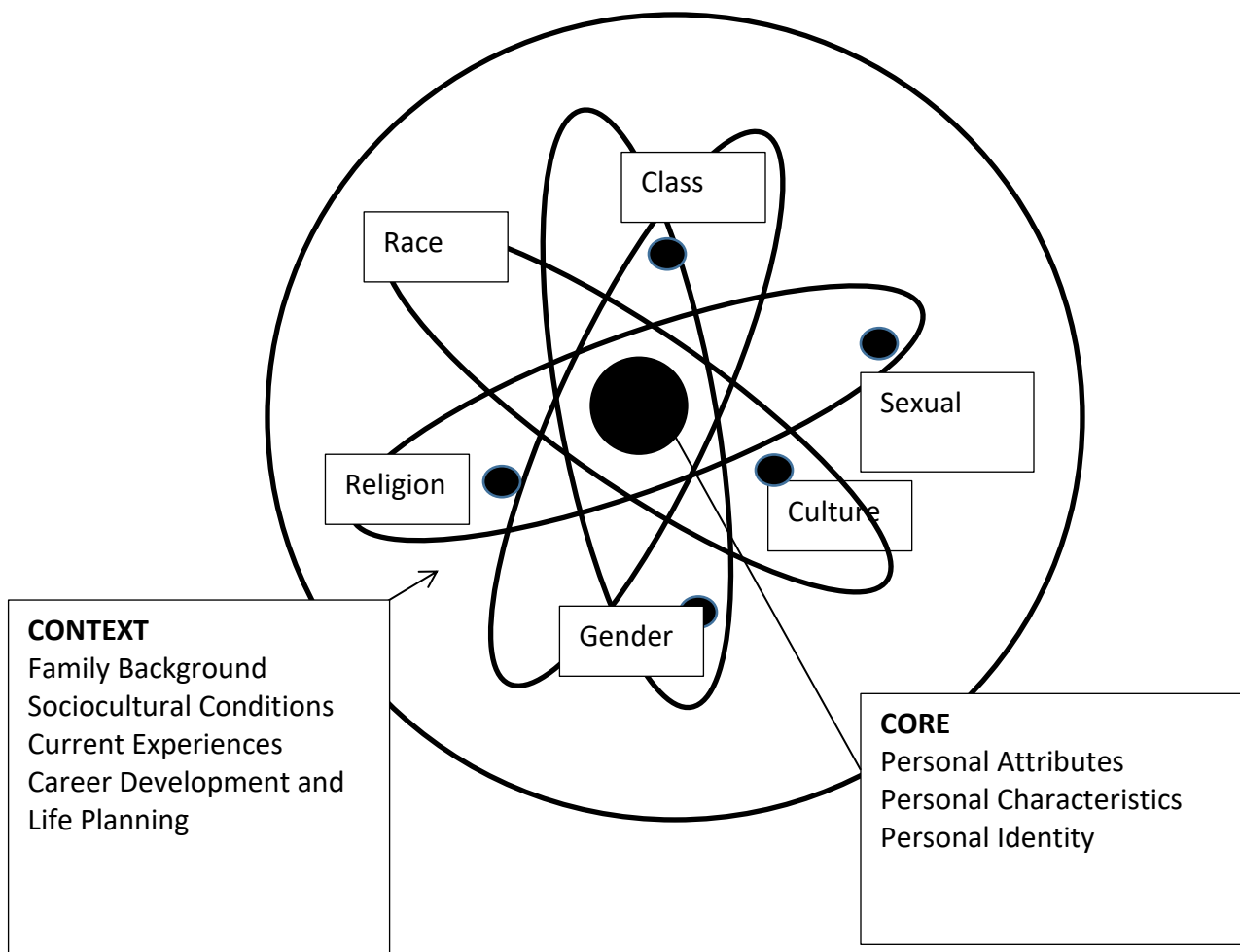


Figure 1. Jones, S.R. & McEwen, M.K. (2000). A Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, (41)4, 405-414.

This model, as shown in Figure 1, offers a conceptual depiction of relationships of college students' socially constructed identity dimensions, understanding that any of the dimensions

cannot be understood alone. These dimensions are understood only in relation to other dimensions.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) explained identity development in college age students through a psychosocial theory and is cited often in research of student development. Erikson's (1959) research was based on psychosocial theory as well that included stages of development; however, Chickering (1969) established seven vectors of development. The seven vectors were later revised and updated in 1993 with the help of Linda Reisser. Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified the vectors to be: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The seven vectors were developed to illustrate how a student's development in college can affect them socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Chickering (1969) noted that changes that may occur in one student may not happen in another or at the same rate, which means that each student may move through each vector at their own rate. The first vector developing competence includes interpersonal, intellectual, and physical and manual qualities. Intellectual level of competence involves using one's mind to build skill using analytic and comprehensive thought (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The interpersonal characteristics include listening, communicating, understanding, and functioning in different relationships, while the physical and manual qualities involve athletics, self-discipline, and competition (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The second vector is managing emotions. These emotions might include guilt, desire, depression, and embarrassment. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted that being able to identify emotions and their levels of intensity are the key to moving through this vector. The third vector is moving through autonomy toward interdependence, where an individual will move from reliance on

others to reliance on oneself. Developing mature interpersonal relationships is the fourth vector. Two aspects of this vector are (1) tolerance and appreciation of differences and (2) capacity for intimacy (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). During this vector, a student will have increased tolerance and appreciation of differences, as well the capacity for lasting, healthy, intimate relationships with others in their environment. The fifth vector is establishing identity, and includes development from the first four vectors. The development of identity includes the following:

- (1) comfort with body and appearance,
- (2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation,
- (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context,
- (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style,
- (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others,
- (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem,
- (7) personal stability and integration. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 49)

In establishing identity, it is important to know oneself and the attitudes toward oneself. The sixth vector is developing purpose, which challenges an individual to examine why they attend college. Chickering and Reisser (1993) note that students must make decisions that will challenge them to balance personal aspirations, career goals, as well as commitment to family and self. The seventh vector is developing integrity. In a college student's development, they must give thought to their beliefs, opinions, and viewpoints while monitoring their behavior (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) student development theory has been applied to research. Ortiz (1993) found that living away from home increases leadership and interpersonal

skills and cultural awareness. This is application of the third vector “moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Chickering and Kytle (1999) found that students living at home are “less fully involved” in social, academic, or extracurricular activities in school with others as compared to those students who live on campus. All colleges will encourage students toward “developing competence,” especially intellectual competence. If a student doesn’t stay isolated throughout their time in college, they will develop a substantial amount of interpersonal competence. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted that developing interpersonal competence is a result of the amount of people a student interacts with throughout his or her college life.

Research has identified that identity development is viewed to be different in men than it is in women. According to McEwen (1996), "gender identity development can be defined as how one views oneself in relation to one's own gender group, that is, as a woman or a man, and how these views evolve and become more complex over time" (p. 202). McEwen divided theories about gender and identity development into two groups: those that take an awareness of sexism as a key factor in the development of an “internal, personal definition” (p. 202) of what it means to be a woman or a man and those that are "general models of identity development specific to women ... or to men" (1996, p. 202). Originally, identity research was conducted on men. Later, women were added to identity research but many times viewed as falling short in comparison to men (Marcia & Friedman, 1970). Where men’s development focuses on occupational achievement or career as the key element of their identity, women’s identity is focused on affiliation and relationships. The reevaluation of the applicability of identity theory to women and the emergence of researchers who focus their study on women have led to a greater willingness to study gender differences without assigning greater value to either gender (Giele, 1982).

According to Evans (1995), female college students develop differently than male college students. Evans noted that women rate higher on the intimacy scale than males, and they also rate interpersonal relationships higher than males. A man's identity is associated with descriptors such as work and career, while a woman's identity is associated with descriptors such as affiliation, family, and love. More specific, Evans identified family roles, self-concept, interpersonal relationship, and career paths as components of a woman's identity. Gilligan (1980) supported the idea that a woman's identity is associated through her relationships, such as being a mother, daughter, or friend.

Josselson (1987) has theorized on women's identity development, studying women at different stages of their lives. She placed a woman's identity in a social context, and recognizes different roles in their lives. Josselson (1987) conducted three different studies considering female identity. The first study she conducted focused on women in their later college years, looking at their process of identity formation. Josselson (1987) interviewed 60 women, in late adolescence, at the point of establishing identity based on Erikson's model. She describes the identity that forms in late adolescence as the foundation for her adult identity. However, Josselson (1987) does not feel that the adolescent identity is the end. She conducted follow-up studies with these women both ten and twenty years later, and found that their identity continued to develop and reclassify over time based on life experiences (Josselson, 1996). Her research has been impactful in female identity; however, it has limitations. She only interviewed white women and there was not enough representation of varying sexual orientations. Jones (1997) built on Josselson's (1987/1996) research by interviewing ten women who were diverse in culture, religion, race, and sexual orientation. Jones was able to identify ten categories which once combined formed one core area of the contextual influences on the building of an identity.

Jones (1997) identified five of the ten categories that could be seen as relating to the intersections of multiple identities. They are:

- (1) Relative salience of identity dimensions in relation to difference,
- (2) The multiple ways in which race matters,
- (3) The multiple layers of identity,
- (4) Braiding of gender,
- (5) Importance of cultural identification and cultural values. (p. 397)

A consistent theme in both Jones (1997) and Josselson (1987/1996) is in the way women see themselves as either like or different than others. Results from Jones' (1997) research identified a link between identity development and feminist identity. Individuals identify themselves in many ways and based on many factors, such as gender or social environment, and they will influence their overall sense of identity.

Leadership Development

Identity development is related and important to leadership development. Hall (2004) stated "identity is probably the most important aspect of leader...development" (p. 154). Researchers have discovered that leaders develop as one's sub-identity becomes differentiated, more complex and subsequently integrated (Day & Lance, 2004). Lord and Hall (2005) described leadership development as the process of improving the fit between an individual's personal identity and leadership duties. Lord and Hall (2005) also believed that as a leader develops their identity, they will move from focusing on individual to relational and then to group foci.

To understand how leadership is developed, it is important to understand how characteristics of a leader and how leadership is defined. Leaders can be distinguished from non-

leaders based on characteristics such as drive, a desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business (Kirpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Definitions of leadership vary in terms of emphasis on leader abilities, personality traits, influence relationships, cognitive versus emotional orientation, individual versus group orientation, and appeal to self versus collective interests (Hartog & Koopman, 2011, p. 167).

Early theories about leadership were based on the Trait Approach (Northouse, 2015), also called the “great man” theories, which focused on identifying specific traits and characteristics usually possessed by great military, social, and political leaders. The belief was that individuals were born with these traits. This theory was prominent from the 1900s to the 1940s, and then re-emerged in the 1970s (Northouse, 2015).

Another perspective is the Behavior Approach, which emerged in the late 1930s and focused more on behavior. It focused on what leaders do and how they act in small group situations, as well as organizational settings (Northouse, 2015). In the late 1960s, the Situational Approach theories emerged, with the likes of Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Reddin’s (1967) research. This approach focused on the premise that different situations demanded different types of leadership. Hersey and Blanchard’s (1977) situational leadership theory proposed that leaders should vary their behavior based on the member’s maturity. They also classified leader behaviors in two categories: initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure, also called task behavior, was one-way directional communication from the leader to the member (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Consideration, also called relationship behavior, was two-way directional communication from the leader when providing emotional or social support to the member (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). If the member had a low maturity level, then the leader would have high task/low relationship behavior and mostly a one-way communication from the

leader to the follower. For those members with a high maturity level, the leader would display low task/high relationship behavior, in which members could facilitate leader behavior and shared decision making would transpire. The path-goal theory was another situational approach. It examined how leaders would use employee motivation to increase satisfaction and performance, as the theory emphasized the relationship between the leader's style and characteristics of the subordinates and the work setting (Northouse, 2015). According to House and Mitchell (1974), leadership generates motivation when the payoff for the subordinate increases in number and kind, as well as when it makes the path to the goal clear and easy to travel. It requires coaching and direction that will help to remove road blocks and obstacles along the way. A third situational approach is the contingency theory that focused on matching situational variables with a leader's style (Northouse, 2015). Feidler's (1967) contingency theory hypothesized that effective group performance was reliant upon a match of the leader's personality and the situation. Some specific situational factors that affect the leader's effectiveness include leader member relations, power position of the leader, and the degree of task structure.

In the 1990s, the Relational Approach emerged. Researchers began to take a deeper look at the relationships between leaders and followers. The theory that emerged from this approach is the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which predicts that high-quality relations produce more positive leader outcomes than low-quality relations (Northouse, 2015). The "New Leadership" Approach emerged in the mid-1980s, and reflects the works of Bass (1985, 1990) who promoted visionary or charismatic leadership theories. This approach is now known more for what is called transformational leadership theory, which describes leadership as a process that changes organizations and people (Northouse, 2015). Bass (1985) noted that transformational

leadership motivates followers to do more than the expected by doing the following: (a) raising follower's level of consciousness about the importance and value of specific and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization or team, and (c) moving followers to address higher level needs.

In the 21st century, a diverse range of approaches emerged. Of the Emerging Leadership Approaches, a few to note are authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership. Authentic leadership looks at the authenticity of leaders and their leadership, while the spiritual leadership approach looks at how leaders use values and membership to motivate their followers (Northouse, 2015). The Servant leadership approach emphasizes the leaders as the servants who focus on the needs of their followers, helping them to become more autonomous, knowledgeable, and like servants themselves (Northouse, 2015). Many of these approaches still exist today, and have built upon one another. Many times, the theories influence further studies and the development of new leadership theories (Northouse, 2015).

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) stated that leadership is “relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good” (p. 21). Bryman (1992) noted that most leadership definitions emphasize three main elements: group, influence, and goal. He defined leadership in terms of a process of social influence whereby a leader steers members of a group toward a goal. Yukl (1998) defined leadership as influence processes affecting the interpretation of events for follower, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish the objectives, the motivation of follower to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. Yukl (1998) identified particular traits that predict effective

leadership. They are: high energy level and stress tolerance, internal locus of control orientation, emotional maturity, socialized power motivation, moderate achievement motivation, and a low need for affiliation.

Peter Northouse (2007) defined leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Yukl (1998) and Northouse’s (2007) definitions of leadership identify a few consistent components of the phenomenon of leadership. Some of these central components are: (a) leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influencing others, (c) leadership happens within the context of a group, (d) leadership involves goal attainment, and (e) these goals are shared by leaders and their followers (Rowe, 2013, p. 1). By suggesting that leadership is a process, it makes it available to all, not just a select few who have particular traits. It also means that leadership is a two-way interactive event, not a one-way event where only the leader can influence the follower. Considering leadership about influence, it is important for it to be done ethically. Leading gives an individual the ability to influence subordinates, peers, and bosses in an organizational context (Rowe, 2013). Rowe (2013) stated that a fourth component of leadership is about influencing a group of people who are engaged in a common goal or purpose. This could take place amongst a small or large group of individuals. The fifth component of leadership also involves the achievement of goals. Therefore, leadership is about guiding a group of people toward reaching an endpoint or accomplishing a task (Rowe, 2013). Everyone is moving in the same direction to accomplish something. For example, a coach works with their players to achieve a conference championship. The last component of leadership involves leaders and followers sharing objectives. Leadership means that leaders will establish shared objectives with their followers. It will aid in the achievement of the goals, rather than the leader determining the objectives and

expecting everyone else to follow (Rowe, 2013). Bolden et al. (2011) expanded up on Northouse's (2007) identification of common themes and described leadership as "(1) a process, (2) of social influence, (3) to guide, structure, and/or facilitate (4) behaviors, activities, and/or relationships (5) toward the achievement of shared aims" (p. 39).

As noted previously, identity development is important to the process of leadership development. Leadership development is occurring in the higher education environment, as the general mission of higher education has historically been to educate students to be future leaders (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). Researchers have indicated that students can and do increase their leadership skills during the college years (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Dugan and Komives (2007) conducted a multi-site, multi-year study to examine students' experiences in college that contribute to leadership outcomes. The sample consisted of 52 campuses, totaling 50,378 students. The results demonstrated the influence of the collegiate environment on college student leadership development (Dugan & Komives, 2007). The areas that Dugan and Komives' (2007) study identified that matter to the leadership development were: discussions of socio-cultural issues, gender differences, pre-college experience, race and ethnic group differences, mentoring, campus involvement, service involvement, marginalized student's openness to change, positional leadership roles, and formal leadership programs. It is important for higher education institutions to understand its significant role in developing leadership capacity as it is a source of potential change (Astin & Astin, 2000). Research on student leadership gave rise to two models of leadership and development that incorporate the notion of developing an identity as leader. The two models that have contributed to scholarship and practice in postsecondary settings are: The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (HERI, 1996) and the Relational Leadership Model (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). The

Social Change Model of Leadership Development was the first leadership model intended for college students. In this model, leadership is defined as a value -based process that is purposeful and collaborative, and leads to social change (HERI, 1996). The model consists of the “Seven Cs,” which are seven interrelated and interacting values. The values work on the individual (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment), the group (collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility), and society (citizenship) levels. The interaction of these seven core values leads to the eighth and final value of change for the common good (HERI, 1996). In the Relational Leadership Model, Komives et al. (1998) described that relational leadership consisted of five key elements: purposeful, process-oriented, inclusive, empowering, and ethical. These five key elements are consistent with the results of the research study Komives et al. (2005) conducted that resulted in the grounded theory of leadership identity development. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development and the Relational Leadership Model formed the foundation for the emerging model of Leadership Identity Development (LID) (Komives et al., 2004) that is the theoretical framework for this study.

Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model

Our society has moved to a more knowledge-based, networked environment that calls for “new ways of leading, relating, learning, and influencing change” (Allen & Cherrey, 2000, p.1). The principles involved in this type of value-centered type of leadership have influenced new pedagogical leadership models (Komives et al., 2005). These principles involve components such as moral purposes, ethical action, collaboration, and leaders who transform followers into leaders themselves (as cited in Komives et al., 2005). Many college leadership educators feel that college students are best informed by a leadership approach that has a relational-value approach to it (HERI, 1996). Researchers who have developed leadership models for college

student leadership development firmly believe that collaboration among individuals, groups, and communities are necessary for social change to occur. One of those models is the UCLA/Eisenhower social change model (HERI, 1996). This relational model reflects what Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) defined leadership as, “a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good” (p. 21). The social change model includes components such as inclusiveness, empowerment, ethics, purposefulness, and process orientation, which are very relational and value-centered in nature. Understanding the importance of developing leadership within college age students, it is important to understand how the leadership identity develops. There was no research completed on how the leadership identity developed, which led Komives et al.’s (2005) grounded theory study that resulted in The Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (Komives et al., 2006).

Komives’ (2005) grounded theory study on developing a leadership identity used an intensity sampling process to eventually choose a diverse group of participants, which included 13 students that exhibited the theoretical dimensions of relational leadership. The experiences and reflections that the participants shared revealed the way a leadership identity is developed, and the theory emerged as the relationships between the individual concepts combined into an integrated framework that described and explained the phenomenon of leadership identity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The results of the study revealed five categories that interacted to create a leadership identity. Those categories include:

- (1) Essential developmental influences: The essential influences that foster development of a leader identity include adult influences, peer influences, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement;
- (2) Developing self: This category includes a deepening self-awareness, building self-

- confidence, establishing interpersonal efficacy, applying new skills, and expanding motivation;
- (3) Group influences: In this category, students engaged in groups, experience learning from membership continuity, and have changing perceptions of groups;
 - (4) Changing view of self with others: This the time when students move from either being dependent or independent to interdependent.
 - (5) Broadening view of leadership: This category identifies a change in how the student moves from viewing leadership as the external other, positional, as non-positional, and then as a process. (Komives et al., 2005, pp. 599-605)

In the Developing Self category, the individual will progress from recognizing leadership from other individuals, to recognizing their own leadership potential and having a desire to change something. This will lead to the individual becoming more involved and taking on different roles where they might model other leaders. Eventually, the individual will seek to facilitate a good group process, commit to a passion, become responsible for sustaining a group process, and then continue to work on self-development. In the Group Influences category, the individual will begin by wanting to get involved and then will narrow their interests. This individual will begin to take responsibilities and model older peers, which will lead to valuing the process and connectedness, and eventually the anticipation of new roles.

In the Changing View of Self with Others category, the individual will begin by seeing themselves as dependent on others. Halfway through the six stages of leadership identity development, the individual will see themselves as independent when they take on leadership roles, and then dependent when they take on a follower role. In the final stages, the individual will become aware the interdependence individuals have on one another when working in a

group. In the Broadening View of Leadership Category, the individual will begin by not seeing themselves as a leader. They will move to wanting to do more and be involved. This will lead to the individual understanding the role of a leader, how to lead in a way that others will want to be a part of, and eventually recognizing the responsibility of being a leader and seeing themselves as a leader. In the Developmental Influences category, the individual will begin by rely on affirmation and direction by adults and older peers. As they move through the stages of leadership identity development, they will see adults as mentors but will begin practicing leadership in peer relationships. Eventually, the individual will respond to mean makers, experience shared learning, and will reflect on the group processes.

The categories described above interact to create a leadership identity. “Developing self interacts with group influences to shape the student’s changing view of self with others. This changing view of self in relation to others shaped the student’s broadening view of what leadership is and created a leadership identity” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 596). This central category of leadership identity then develops over six identity stages. Movement through the stages of leadership identity development will be informed by their experiences within each of the five categories. The students will progress through one stage before beginning the next. The movement through stages will be circular as well as linear (Komives et al., 2005). The six stages of identity development include:

- (1) Awareness: The first stage where there is early recognition that leaders exist, but it is viewed as external to the self;
- (2) Exploration/Engagement: This stage is a time of intentional involvement, experiencing groups, and taking on responsibilities, though not positional;
- (3) Leader Identified: In this stage, all participants perceive that groups consist of leaders

and followers, and those leaders are responsible for the group outcome. Students become intentional about their group roles in this stage;

- (4) Leadership Differentiated: In this stage, students differentiate leadership beyond the role of the positional leader, and can see that anyone in the group can do leadership; students now understand that people in organizations are interdependent;
- (5) Generativity: In stage 5, students become actively committed to larger purposes and to the groups and to those who sustain them. Students begin to accept responsibility for developing others into leaders;
- (6) Integration/Synthesis: This stage is a time of continual, active engagement in which leadership is a part of a daily process and is part of one's self-identity. The student has an increased level of internal confidence and integrity. (Komives et al., 2005, pp. 606-607)

The Awareness stage of leadership identity development is the first stage, where the individual does not see themselves as a leader but can see others fitting in that role. The individuals are aware of parental figures or other national and historic figures filling this role. At this stage, some are not even aware of leaders or leadership at all. In the second stage, Exploration, the individual has become involved in different roles within groups, seeking to learn as much as they could from participation. During this time, they are observing their peers and adults who are leading. In the Leader Identified stage, the individual becomes more intentional about their role, either in the position of a leader or a follower. The leader is a person who must get the job done and others will look to this individual for direction. As individuals become more involved in this stage, they will try on different roles in the group process. In stage four, called Leadership Differentiated, the individual no longer sees leadership as just positional. It is

recognized that anyone in the group can participate, even without a title. There is also awareness that leadership is a process that happens between and among people. Members within the group become empowered to take on responsibility, trying out different roles. In stage five, called Generativity, individuals exhibit a passion for what they are doing and desire to see others develop into possible leaders. They have a concern for the sustainability of their groups they are involved in, so they commit to supporting and mentoring others. In the final stage, called Integration/Synthesis, the individual sees leading as part of their self-identity. Leadership is a daily process, and can be effective in most any context, no matter their role within a group. They still work on self-development, and feel that having integrity and credibility is important. They also understand organizational complexity and can work well in any role.

The essential developmental influences that foster the leadership identity development will change across the six stages of the leader identity. For example, how peers influence a new leader is different than how they influence an experienced leader. Komives' Leadership Identity Model (LID) illustrates a cycle of how students engaged in the categories that in turn influenced the development of their leadership identity and how that developed over time (Komives et al., 2005).

This is a stage-based model, which means that an individual progresses through one stage before beginning another. Stages allow for linear movement, as well as cyclical movement. As one goes through one stage, they move through in a circular direction. This allows for the developmental stages to be repeatedly, with each stage becoming deeper in understanding and performing of the stage (Komives et al., 2006). Reaching each stage is affected by the context of the environment and each individual's level of readiness as seen in Figure 2. Developing self interacts with group influences, which changes how an individual will view themselves with

others. This changing view of self in relation to others shapes the student's broadening view of what leadership is and creates a leadership identity that works through multiple stages in its development. Developmental influences will be present in the leadership identity development process, but they will change during each stage.

The helix model of development allows for stages to be repeatedly experienced, and each return is experienced with a deeper and more complex understanding and performing of the stage (Perry, 1981). Development is not only cyclic, but also complex. The achievement of each stage is influenced by a myriad of contextual factors in the environment and by each individual's variation in readiness. (King, 1994) Each transition to a new stage marks a shift in thinking, a gradual process of moving from old ways of thinking to trying new ways.

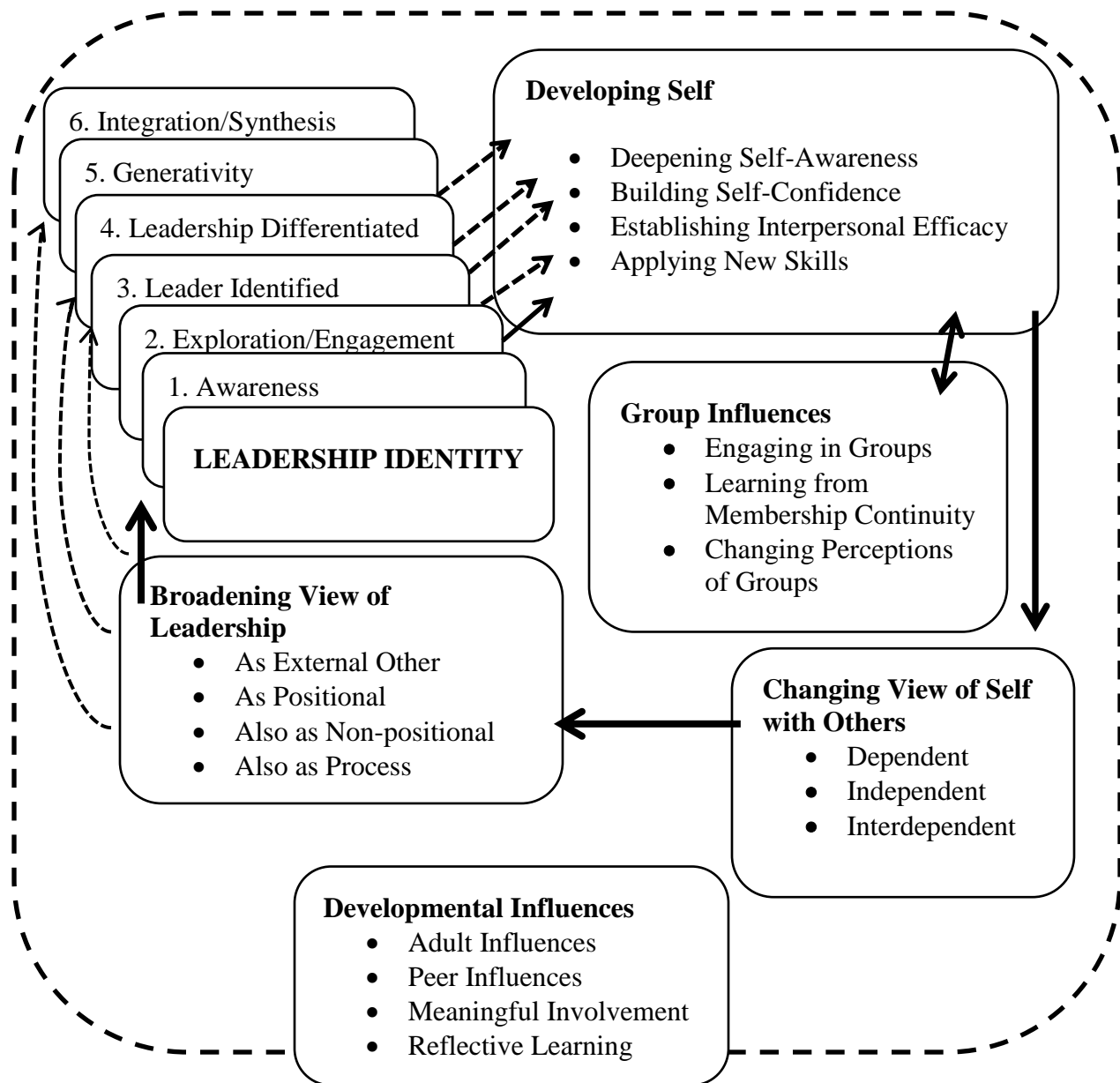


Figure 2. Developing a Leadership Identity: Illustrating the Cycle. Komives, S. R., Longerbeam, S.D., Owen, J.E., Mainella, F.C., & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 593-611.

The students in the grounded theory study had multiple social identities and factors in *developing self* were central to developing a leadership identity, and this leadership identity developed over time (Komives et al., 2005). This follows Erikson's (1968) assertions that people discover their identities within a social context, and this is done through a continual

process of observation and reflection. McEwen (2003) stated that identity development is a process of becoming more complex in one's personal and social identities. McEwen (2003) also noted that not only can a person's identity can be viewed as a complete view of self, but also as a part of one's identity such as an athletic identity or a leadership identity.

There are limitations in Komives' (2005) grounded theory study. The participants examined were selected because they showed a relational leadership approach to others. This may not be related to those who use different leadership styles. In addition, the study reflects the developmental process for students who were involved in organizations. For those that do not have much formal experience with organizations, this study may not relate. There also could be more related research completed with a more diverse research team. Komives' grounded theory in leadership identity development can be applicable to intercollegiate athletes as leadership is relational, and participating in intercollegiate athletics is the same as college students being a part of an organization.

It is important to note that the LID model's developmental influences were extremely critical to changing how one thought of self and others and moving into the more complex identity stages (Komives et al., 2006). In this study, the developmental influences are the focus as the researcher wants to determine if the developmental influences are present in the leadership identity development of female, Olympic sport intercollegiate athletes. These key developmental influences include:

- (a) Adult Influence: Adults play different roles in influencing student movement throughout the leadership identity development stages. Adults can be important in confidence building and showing support for students. They can create safe spaces for students, and can be role models. Adults are usually first to recognize a student's leadership potential,

and they become mentors to students. They eventually become mean-makers, and make a difference in each stage of the development of student's leadership identity;

(b) Peer Influence: Engaging with peers, whether they are older or the same age, gains depth and meaning as the leadership identity develops. Older peers serve as role models, getting younger peers involved in organizations and modeling leader behavior. Peers are a source of affirmation and support. Peers can serve as teammates, followers, collaborators, and mean-makers.

(c) Meaningful Involvement: Experiences that include involvement can be the training ground where leadership identity evolved. Involvement helps clarify personal values and interests, as well as experience diverse peers, learn about self, and develop new skills. Team-based involvement can teach students to do their best while supporting others at the same time.

(d) Reflective Learning: Opportunities to critically reflect allows students to uncover their integrity, passions, and commitment to continuous learning and self-assessment. Reflection could include journaling or having meaningful conversations. Students can also have experiences in which they intentionally learn about leadership through training, retreats, and classes. This can give them new language and ideas which adds to their development. (Komives et al., 2005, pp. 596-599)

These developmental influences define the supports in the environmental context in which the development of leadership identity can occur. These influences are critical to changing consciousness about self and others and moving into more complex stages of identity (Komives et al., 2006). In intercollegiate athletics, these developmental influences have the potential to be present and become impactful in the leadership development of the student-athletes. For

example, coaches can be an adult influence during a student-athlete's playing career. Adler and Adler's (1988) study of intense loyalty in organizations, presented a case study of why loyalty is different on athletic teams than in other settings. The researchers studied a college basketball team over five years. They noted that coaches have an enormous influence over their athletes.

By virtue of their position of authority, power, and superordination, coaches wield enormous influence over the lives of their players. In their subordinate positions, players at the University were dependent on the coach for almost all their daily needs and responsibilities. Their food, lodging, sense of well-being, and future careers were controlled by him. (Adler & Adler, 1988, p. 405).

Coaches also have a great impact on an athlete's training process, performance outcomes, and specific aspects of their personal lives (Poczwardowski, Bardot, & Menschen, 2002). In this study, the researcher will be seeking to determine if the experiences of participating in intercollegiate athletics and the influences on the intercollegiate athlete's aid in developing their leadership identity. This can lead to effectively using the LID model as an instructional guide for leadership programs within athletic departments.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate athletics can be viewed as an organization within a postsecondary institution. "Intercollegiate athletics are a unique part of North American institutions of Higher Education that were originally established as part of institutions' physical education programming for the purpose of providing young men and women with competitive opportunities to develop their athletic skills at a very high level" (Geiger, 2013, p. 1). Geiger goes on to identify that intercollegiate athletics is intended to contribute to the overall education of the students, "helping them to engage in experiences designed to produce the maximum

development of their total personalities, improve their abilities to live harmoniously and cooperatively with others, attain competencies leading to economic efficiency and independence, and enjoy the privileges and discharge the obligations of enlightened democratic citizenship” (Geiger, 2013, p. 1).

Being involved in this type of organization can benefit the student from a development perspective. “Scholars have suggested that student-athletes develop athletically, academically, and socially” (Nite, 2012, p. 1). Marmion (1987) argued that athletics are an integral and exemplary component of a university’s process of student development. There are values that are learned on the field or court that may be different than those learned in the classroom, however, they are no less important. “Values of character, such as dedication, sacrifice, teamwork, integrity, and leadership can be learned on the field, both from coaches dedicated to their teaching roles and from the experiences of athletic competition itself” (Duderstadt, 2003, p. 189). Student-athletes also enjoy the benefits from seeing themselves as athletes. Harris (1993) and Chu (1989) both examined the benefits of college athletics for the athlete and found that participation in sports helps the athlete develop strong character and a positive identity. Chu’s research also found that student-athletes developed characteristics such as dominance, responsibility, sociability, and self-acceptance due to participation in sports. James Duderstadt, the former President at the University of Michigan, wrote a book about intercollegiate athletics and the American university. In his book, he commented that

Competitive sports, whether at the intramural, club, or varsity level, can provide important educational experiences for students. Even big-time intercollegiate athletics, when kept in balance with academic life, can contribute in a positive way to a college education. Varsity sports can provide unifying events that pull together extraordinary

complex and diverse communities that make up the contemporary university. When they are conducted with integrity and in accord with our educational mission, college sports can provide students with opportunities to develop important traits such as dedication, sacrifice, and teamwork. (Duderstadt, 2003, p. 10)

Being involved in intercollegiate athletics can bring unique stressors to the student-athletes that the general population does not have to deal with, “such as time demands, relationships with coaches, and missed scheduled classes” (Davoren & Hwang, 2014, p. 1). Watt and Moore (2001) agree that student-athletes and other college students’ experiences are different. They state that playing intercollegiate sports

adds a complex layer to student life. The college student athlete faces all the challenges experienced by nonathletes (social adjustment, career exploration, intellectual growth).

In addition to the daily student routine (going to class, going to the cafeteria, and participating in social events), student-athletes also have their sport-related activities (practice every day, visiting the athletic trainer for injury treatment, traveling for away games, studying team plays). (Watt & Moore, 2001, pp. 7-18)

Intercollegiate Athletics and Leadership Development

Leadership development can occur in different contexts, such as in the workplace, the classroom, or in organizational settings. Dugan and Komives (2007) reported findings from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) and reflect data gathered from a multi-site, multi-year project that includes over 50,000 students from 52 campuses. They found that involvement in organizations matter to leadership development. Dugan and Komives (2007) suggested that students must work with others to truly learn leadership, and that being involved can develop in-take processes that promote identity development, meaningful involvement, and membership

persistence. Astin (1993) addressed the impact that involvement in clubs and organization has on students. He noted that leadership abilities, interpersonal skills, public speaking ability, and elected student offices have statistically significant correlations with hours per week spent participating in student clubs and organizations. Kuh was another researcher that focused on leadership qualities in college students involved in co-curricular activities. Kuh (1991) noted that students actively participating in co-curricular activities reported higher levels of leadership and communication skills. They also can develop interpersonally and learn transferable skills. Astin (1993) found that growth in self-esteem, autonomy, and communication skills were a result of increased personal development derived from organizational involvement.

Leadership has been defined as a role that is understood in terms of the social and cultural context within which it is embedded (Kellerman, 1984). Leadership development has been linked to intercollegiate athletics, as it is an organizational setting and has its own social and cultural context. Pascarella and Smart (1991) found that athletic participation in college had a positive impact on leadership behavior and interpersonal skills. Ryan (1989) found that athletes reported positive changes in leadership abilities. Dobosz and Beaty (1999) noted that athletes showed higher levels of leadership than non-athletes. Leadership within intercollegiate athletics has been described as an interpersonal process within a situational premise and is contingent upon the relationships and tasks that occur and exist within intercollegiate athletics. Shields, Gardner, Bredemeir, and Bostrom (1997) examined the relationship between leadership behaviors and group cohesion in intercollegiate team sports. They found a strong relationship between high task association and group cohesion. Thus, an argument can be made for the development of leadership qualities within an athletic environment. Ryan (1989) found that athletic involvement is positively associated with overall motivation to earn a degree, satisfaction with the college

experience, as well as the development of interpersonal skills and leadership abilities.

Challdurai and Saleh (1980) proposed a Multidimensional Model of Leadership in which the characteristics and qualities of the leader and group members relate with the situational factors such as the athletic department philosophy. The specific characteristics of an effective leader vary depending on the context, so sport leadership characteristics that are important for one sport will be different from those of another sport.

Coaches believe that athlete leadership is important to teams. Todd and Kent (2004) reported that coaches believe athlete leadership is important to a team's success, and that athletes prefer peer leaders who work hard and show respect to their teammates. Studies examining student leader behavior may also help to clarify the athlete leader role. Specifically, Blachly (1975) identified collegiate student leaders in many organizations (e.g., student government, sororities, etc.), had them participate in an 18-hour leadership training course focused on enhancing leader effectiveness in two specific leadership dimensions, consideration and initiating structure, and finally asked them to complete the 16PF (Sixteen Personality Factors) questionnaire and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). Results of the measures were compared with control groups who were not taken through the training course. Researchers discovered that when comparing 16PF outputs, the leader group and the control group overall did not differ. LBDQ results showed leader groups subjected to the leader training scored significantly better on measures of task (initiating structure) and emotional (consideration) leader behavior competency. Thus, in this study, effective leadership was judged to be associated with not only task-oriented leadership behaviors but relationship-oriented behaviors as well. In athletics, student-athletes are constantly working on relationships with those around them, as well as accomplishing tasks.

Leadership roles many times have been focused on coaches, but there is a need for peer leaders as they perform functions within the group that former leader fail to fulfill (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Hirt, Hoffman, and Sedlacek (1983) noted that team members are required to room together, eat together, share common facilities, observe curfews, and spend large amounts of time together in their sport. Many individuals believe that the unique characteristics of sport can result in more expectations of and demands on student-athletes. Student-athletes must balance the time demands of academics, study hall, training room rehab, strength and conditioning, practice, game competition, travel time, and community service. There are opportunities for student-athletes to develop their leadership identity with the influences of adults and peers present during their intercollegiate athletic experience. These student-athletes also experience meaningful involvement from being involved in a group and have many reflective learning experiences, whether through on-the-field or court participation that include success and failures or through the relationship challenges that come from working around a group of other student-athletes.

Relational Leadership

Komives et al. (1998) identified leadership as a relational process of people working together to accomplish change or to make a difference that will benefit the common good. They defined relational leadership as purposeful, process- oriented, inclusive, empowering and ethical. This provides a meaningful explanation about the relational leadership phenomenon. In another study, Allen and Cherry (2000) stated that “Relationships are the connective tissue of the organization.... over time, these new relationships, built on trust and integrity, become the glue that holds us together.” (p. 31) Specifically, the base of relational leadership is positive psychology that helps individuals to connect themselves to others and to their leaders.

In relational leadership, relationships are the key to leadership effectiveness (Komives et al., 1998). Relational leadership is inclusive as it includes others by showing them valuable involvement and being open to dissimilarities (Komives et al., 1998). Relational leadership provides empowerment by providing the employees the sense that their contribution matters and they have the right to take initiative (Komives et al., 1998). It is a shared thing and members are responsible for outcomes. Relational leadership has vision (Regan & Brooks, 1995) as it provides an attitude of hope and an ability to make a commitment. It is purposeful by forming a common vision, establishing individual and group goals and obligation to fulfill those objectives. Relational leadership is ethical as it is driven by positive values, individual integrity, goodwill and moral commitment of the leadership and the followers (Komives et al., 1998).

The Relational Leadership Model (Komives et al., 2007) was developed to identify the important components to relational leadership. The model has five components, including: inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented. The Inclusive component means that there is inclusion of people and diverse points of view (Komives et al., 2007). It promotes an understanding of self and others, citizenship, frames and multiple realities, and organizational cultures. It promotes value in people's differences, treating individuals with fairness and equality, the belief that everyone can make a difference and that all members are connected and needed. Lastly, the Inclusive component focuses on developing talent, listening, building cohabitations, framing, and engaging in civil discourse (Komives et al., 2007). The second component is Empowering, which focuses on empowering others who are involved (Komives et al., 2007). It promotes self-esteem, empowerment, power, and the impact of power and on policies and procedures. This component exercises the belief that everyone has something to offer, it is important and necessary to have a concern for the growth and

development of others, and that power, information, and decision making are to be shared willingly. Lastly, Empowering involves gate-keeping, sharing information, encouraging or affirming others, promoting self-leadership, learning at individual and team levels, and practicing renewals (Komives et al., 2007). The third component of The Relational Model is Purposeful. This means having an individual commitment to a goal or activity. It is also the individual ability to collaborate and find common ground with others to establish a common purpose, vision for a group, or work toward the public (Komives et al., 2007). The component Purposeful involves the understanding of change process and models, as well as the role of mission and vision. It exercises an attitude that is hopeful, positive and optimistic and helps everyone, as well as the idea that individuals, groups, and organizations make a difference. Lastly, Purposeful involves identifying goals, envisioning, making meaning, thinking creatively, and involving others in the vision-building process (Komives et al., 2007). The fourth component is Ethical, which focuses on being driven by values and standards of leadership which is “good” or moral in nature (Komives et al., 2007). It involves the development of values, influence of systems on justice and care, models of valuing self and others, and ethical decision making. It exercises the encouragement of socially responsible behavior, the idea that character development happens through participating in groups and organizations, that high standards of behavior for each person helps everyone, and that actions which benefit others are preferred over actions which are pursued for self-gain. Lastly, it involves behaving congruently, trusting others and being trustworthy, being reliable and responsible, acting courageously, identifying issues as needing an ethical decision, and confronting inappropriate behavior in others (Komives et al., 2007). The fifth component of The Relational Leadership Model is Process-oriented, which entails how the group goes about being a group, remaining a group, and accomplishing the group’s purpose

(Komives et al., 2007). It involves and understanding of community, group process, relational aspects of leadership, and systems perspective. It exercises the idea that process is as important as outcome, effort of high quality is to be encouraged, and good things happen when people trust the process. Lastly, it involves collaboration, reflecting, making meaning, being challenging, engaging in civil confrontation, as well as learning, giving and receiving feedback (Komives et al., 2007).

Table 2 depicts the specific components of the model, as well as the leadership behavior related to each component.

Table 2

The Relational Leadership Model

Leadership Component	Leadership Behavior
Inclusive	Developing talent; listening; valuing the differences in others
Empowering	Encouraging active involvement; recognizing the value in others and what each person can contribute
Purposeful	Having commitment to a common goal, purpose, or activity
Ethical	Driven by standards and principles that are moral
Process-Oriented	Awareness of how a group operates and accomplishes its purpose

Note. Adaptation of The Relational Model. Komives, S, Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. (2007). *Exploring Leadership for College Students What Want to Make a Difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (68-72).

It is important to discuss relational leadership behavior because the original grounded theory LID study reflected the developmental experiences of college student participants who had been observed working effectively with others towards shared purposes. They demonstrated relational leadership (Komives et al., 1998). The confirmation that students were practicing this type of

leadership behavior allows researchers to examine other co-curricular groups and their activities to see if their experiences contribute to leadership identity development. Many believe that participation in intercollegiate athletics results in relational leadership and development in leadership identity, especially because of the processes the student-athletes participate in, the experiences they have, as well as the relationships they are involved in. This study seeks to determine if all those experiences and processes do contribute to their leadership identity development.

Summary

There is research showing connections with identity development, leadership development, and intercollegiate athletics. Komives et al. (2005) identifies a Leadership Identity Development (LID) model, based on Komives et al.'s (2005) grounded theory on leadership identity development in students. It shows how an individual's leadership identity is developed through stages and with specific developmental influences. There is not a clear, precise, theoretical framework or model in which leadership development is determined, and there is not systematic approach to the study of leadership development in athletics (Mumford, Marks, Connelley, Zaccaro & Reiter-Palmon, 2000). The LID model, based on the grounded theory, provides a clear picture of how a leadership identity is developed, and it can be used to conduct research to identify specific applications of the LID model. Komives et al. (2009) provide suggestions for applying the LID theory, so that it may lead to further research studies that seek to explore these observations further. They include:

- (1) Know your personal LID path: Leadership educators should reflect on their own leadership identity journey;

- (2) Ask students to reflect: This is an essential step in meaning-making. Processing events in an organization or thinking about experiences can aid in the learning process;
- (3) Teach group process: Students should learn functional group skills. This can aid in their view of relational leadership as a process;
- (4) Teach the language of leadership: If students can put words to what they are understanding, they can redefine their understanding of what leadership is;
- (5) Encourage students to stay committed to a group over time: By students staying committed to a group, they are able to invest and work through conflict, whereby experiencing integration within the group;
- (6) Help students connect their LID stage and the dynamics of their organizations: Students may be at a specific stage of leadership identity development, while the company they work for functions at a different stage;
- (7) Use mentors: They can serve as support and companions as students are on the development journey, and can aid in their growth;
- (8) View the role of educator as a coach: Co-curricular educators can act as coaches to provide feedback, encourage opportunities for practice, and create simulations for students to examine their beliefs and ways of thinking;
- (9) Establish partnerships among leadership educators (student affairs and faculty): Educators can integrate LID development opportunities across curricular and co-curricular campus-based experiences;
- (10) Establish a K-20 development model: Students bring their pre-college leadership experiences with them to college, so partnering with K-12 educators can impact

college leadership outcomes. (Komives et al., 2009, pp. 37-39)

These applications can aid in the leadership identity development process of individuals.

Educators, coaches, administrators, and others in positions of leadership can support students in working through the stages of development by facilitating group processes that allow them to explore different roles and responsibilities, as well as provide quality mentorship and feedback to students.

This study aided in further research of Komives et al.'s (2005) LID theory, the LID model, and its application. There is a need for further research that illuminates gender differences in the student-athlete population (Valentine & Taub, 1999). This study aided in gathering data to show that the experiences of and the influences on female intercollegiate athletes can aid in leadership identity development. This data showed that the developmental influences present in Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model can be applied to not only organizational settings such as fraternities and sororities, but also to intercollegiate athletics. The findings from this research study can aid educators, administrators, and coaches in creating environments that will support the development of the leadership identity within these student-athletes.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of and influences on female intercollegiate student-athlete's leadership identity development. Gaining a better understanding of these experiences clarified the influences that were significant. By exploring the possible influences on the leadership identity development of student-athletes, based on Komives et al.'s Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (2005), as well as their experiences as intercollegiate student-athletes, a better understanding was gained of the attributes, behaviors, and relational approaches of those individuals viewed as leaders. There is little known now whether Komives' Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model (Komives et al., 2005) can be applied to the student-athlete identity specifically, so this study gave more insight. The research questions that served as a guide for this study were: 1) How do the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athlete? 2) How do the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development? and 3) What are the processes of being a female student-athlete that contribute to this leadership identity development?

To gain the best knowledge of these female intercollegiate student-athletes' experiences, it was important to have a structured and thorough research design. This chapter gave the researcher an opportunity to provide a rationale for the specific research design that was used in the study, as well as discuss the process for choosing the research participants and describe the research context. The research described the type of data that was collected during the study, as well as the data collection process. Next, the researcher gave a detailed account of how the data

was analyzed and what steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness throughout the entire process. Due to the particular research design used, there was subjectivity involved, so the researcher explained her role specifically as the researcher. The chapter concluded with a summary of how the research study and its focus guided the methodology and the themes derived from the data analysis, as well as described what topics were included in the final chapters of the study.

Research Design

In the research process, there were many decisions to make so it was important that the researcher have a framework in place guiding each part of the research process. The theoretical framework of this study was based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. This theory guided the researcher as it studied the influence of intercollegiate athletics on the female student-athletes' leadership identity development. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism basic principle is that individuals require social interaction to achieve full cognitive development. Individuals will try to make sense of the world around them, and will create subjective meanings of the experiences they have. These meanings can be many and varied, which will require that the researcher consider the complexities rather than minimizing the meanings into a few simple categories (Creswell, 2003). This required the researcher to rely heavily on the view of the situation being studied, as well as the view of the participants. The researcher also had to address processes of interaction amongst others, as well as the context with which the individuals were living or working in. Crotty (1998) noted that social reality is a function of shared meanings, and it is constructed, sustained, and reproduced through social life. Reality will then reproduce itself by individuals acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it. Intercollegiate athletics provides student-athletes a context with which they can learn, make meaning, and share values within that socially constructed context. Female intercollegiate

student-athletes can interpret what they learn and apply that in their relational development, mean making and leadership development within their social organization. In this study, the research examined how involvement in that social organization contributed to their leadership identity development.

For the researcher to explore, comprehend, and describe the experiences of and influences on the female intercollegiate student-athletes, a qualitative case study approach was taken. Cronbach (1975) claims that statistical research is not able to take a full account of the many interactions that transpire in social settings, while qualitative inquiry is able to accept the complex and dynamic quality of the social world. Qualitative research is based upon both the observations and interpretations of people's perception of varying events, and will take a snapshot of people's perceptions in a natural setting (Khan, 2014). Creswell (2003) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of exploring social or human problems using a specific and unique methodological tradition. The study was conducted in the natural setting and allowed the researcher to build a complex, holistic picture while analyzing words and reporting details of the informants. Qualitative research allows a researcher to understand phenomena in its own context-specific setting (Hoepfl, 1997).

Epistemology

Epistemology is the "theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology" (Crotty, 1998). Hamlyn (1995) stated that epistemology "deals with the nature of knowledge, its possibilities, scope and general basis." Maynard (1994) stated that epistemology "is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that knowledge is possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate." That is why it is important for a

researcher to justify their stance. The researcher in this study used a constructivist epistemology as a guide.

It is built on the idea that there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. (Crotty, 1998 pp. 8-9)

Constructivism advances the idea that “individuals are assumed to construct their own meanings and understandings, and this process is believed to involve interplay between existing knowledge and beliefs and new knowledge and experiences” (Yilmaz, 2008, p. 162). In this study, each participant gained growth through their own individual experiences and interactions. The researcher qualitatively investigated the participant’s experiences and interactions, so that she could gain a holistic understanding of how growth was taking place in their lives while competing in intercollegiate athletics.

Methodology

There were a few considerations when deciding on qualitative research as the methodology. Qualitative methods can be used to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon of which not much is known. It can also be used to gain more information or gain a new perspective of something of which much is known. By using qualitative methods, the research already understands that quantitative methods will not give them the information that they are seeking (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). The use of a qualitative approach can be beneficial in providing a better understanding of a phenomenon to the researcher, and it also can be beneficial

to the reader. Lincoln and Guba (2001) stated that if one wants people to understand better than they might otherwise, then one should provide them with information in the form in which they usually experience it. Many writers and researchers have described prominent characteristics of qualitative research (see, for example: Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 2001; Patton, 2015; Eisner, 1997). The following list is a synthesis of their descriptions of qualitative research:

- (1) Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are, maintaining neutrality that is empathetic.
- (2) The researcher acts as the “human instrument” of data collection.
- (3) Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.
- (4) Qualitative research reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive language.
- (5) Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them, and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.
- (6) Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.
- (7) Qualitative research has an emergent (as opposed to predetermined) design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research.
- (8) Qualitative research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness. (Creswell, 2009, pp. 195-196)

These characteristics are not absolutes when it relates to qualitative research. Patton (2015) suggests that they are ideas that can help a researcher strategically plan a research design and specific data collection tactics.

The qualitative methodology used in this research study of the leadership identity development of female intercollegiate student-athletes is case study. A case study was used to develop a complete understanding of a process, for presenting a complete description of an event within its context, establishing cause and effect relationships, and when defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). Yin (2003) explained that a researcher should use a case study approach when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Creswell (2007) noted that a case study's focus is on developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases, which will allow the researcher to study an event, program, or activity with one or more individuals. Creswell (2007) also identified multiple sources of data that can be collected from case studies. They are interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts. The data gets analyzed through description, themes, and cross-case themes of the case. A detailed analysis is then reported on the case. Stake (2005) noted that in case studies a researcher can gain multiple perspectives of those involved in the case, aiming to gather collectively agreed upon and diverse notions of what occurred. Martinson and O'Brien (2010) described a strength of case studies to be their flexibility and ability to put together a comprehensive array of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a detailed analysis and valuable insight. A challenge of conducting case studies is that they can be time consuming

and expensive, at times. In this study, the researcher attempted to gain an understanding of the leadership identity development through examining the influences that surround them and their experiences as an intercollegiate student-athlete. To get the most detailed information, case study was a very appropriate methodology. More specifically, this study utilized an explanatory case study methodology. Explanatory case studies focus on establishing cause-and-effect relationships, describing which causes produce which effects (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). In this study, the researcher hoped to determine what specific experiences and influences could influence (cause) leadership identity development to develop (effect) in female intercollegiate student-athletes. Case studies involving a look into a cause-and-effect relationship have also been called critical instance case studies. In addition to determining the "type" of case study, the researcher must determine if a single-case case study or a multi-case study will be conducted. A single-case design is appropriate when the case represents a "critical" test of a theory, when the case serves a revelatory purpose, or when there is a rare and unique circumstance needs to be studied (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). A multi-case design is used to provide descriptions and make comparisons across cases to provide insight into an issue (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). In this study, the researcher utilized a single case design as the researcher was interested in exploring an issue within this one particular research context.

In summary, utilizing qualitative research methods and more specifically a single-case, exploratory case study provided a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and synthesis. From a social constructivist perspective, the findings from the data created new understanding of female leadership identity development influenced by participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Population

Participants were female intercollegiate student-athletes at an urban, midsize, mid-south university which has a total undergraduate student population of 17,374. The university athletics program is home to over 400 student-athletes that are a part of the 18 different, NCAA sponsored, intercollegiate sports. The men's sports are: Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Rifle, Soccer, Tennis, and Track and Field. The women's sports include: Basketball, Cross Country, Golf, Rifle, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track and Field, and Volleyball. The female intercollegiate student-athletes were chosen from an Olympic Team sport, which could have included the following sports: Cross Country, Golf, Rifle, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track and Field, and Volleyball. Olympic sport athletes experience different influences and pressures, as well as less intense media coverage than those that participate in revenue generating sports, such as Basketball. Olympic sports do not have quite the financial backing that revenue generating sports do, so they are sports that spend money within athletic departments, rather than generating it. These athletes will prioritize their education because even if they go on to a professional career, which such a small percentage do, it will not last long.

Research Participants

Crotty (1998) states that in qualitative research selecting a sample has a profound effect on the quality of the research. Sampling is a method of deducting information about a population instead of directly measuring each individual of that population. Sampling decisions are not only required in deciding which people to interview or what event to follow, they are also about settings and processes (Punch, 1998). Punch (1998) also stated that the sampling plan and parameters need to relate to the purpose of the research study and the research questions. The size of the sample should reflect the relevance to the research topic and not focused on how large

or how small it might be (Flick, 1998). There are many options utilized to select a sample, and in qualitative research, purposeful sampling is dominant as it seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) identifies 16 types of purposeful sampling. They include: extreme or deviant case sampling; intensity sampling; maximum variation sampling; typical case sampling; confirming or disconfirming case sampling; convenience sampling; politically important case sampling; snowball or chain sampling; and others. Purposeful sampling is often used when a researcher's goal is to include participants who represent a broad range of perspectives (Patton, 2015). However, it can also be used when a researcher wishes to only include people who meet a very specific type of criteria.

To make the correct decision in the sampling process, the researcher had to consider the application of Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model, which noted that staff should require students stay committed to a group over time. Sustained group commitment allowed students to observe and resolve group conflicts to begin to develop a concern for sustainability and generativity (Komives et al., 2009). To reach a leadership differentiated stage in Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model, participants must remain in a group. Once they reach this stage, participants change their view of leadership from one of only being exhibited by a power in a defined group, to the idea that leadership can be exhibited by non-positional members as well. Participation in intercollegiate athletics usually lasts more than a year and can span over a four or five-year period. Therefore, intercollegiate athletics participation provided the sustained commitment to a group that allows for examination of identity development.

Another aspect of this study that factors into the sampling process is that this study focused on the experiences of and influences on female intercollegiate student athletes' leadership identity development. This study used only female, Olympic sport athletes from one

urban, mid-size, mid-south university. Therefore, the researcher used criteria sampling procedures. Patton (2015) describes criteria sampling as a process of selecting or searching for based on specific criteria. The female, Olympic sport student-athletes from this university were identified as potential participants by the coaches of their respective sports who worked with the student-athletes daily and could recommend student-athletes based on the following criteria:

- (1) Have been involved in intercollegiate athletes at this university for at least one year;
- (2) Work inclusively with others, demonstrating consciousness of group process, empowering themselves and others to heightened involvement;
- (3) Demonstrated commitment to ethical processes and can work to common purposes;
- (4) Having demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership education and exhibited similar behavior as represented in the LID model.

Once the possible participants were identified, the researcher emailed everyone, inviting them to be a part of the research study. If the individual was interested in being a part of the study, the researcher moved forward with setting up a possible date and location for the initial interview and the focus group.

Data Collection

For this research study, the researcher gathered data from three sources. They were: a semi-structured interview, a focus group, and photo elicitation. Using this triangulation method ensured that the findings were rich, comprehensive, robust, and well-developed.

Before collecting data, the researcher took steps to receive prior approval to conduct the study. The researcher submitted an Internal Review Board (IRB) application to the university seeking permission to conduct the study. Each participant was asked to fill out an informed consent identifying that they understood and agreed to the terms of the research study. Informed

consent is a mechanism used to ensure that people understand what it means to participate in a research study so they can decide in a conscious, purposeful way that they want to participate (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). More specifically, participants were asked to sign and, in turn, received a copy of an informed consent form specifying:

- (1) that their participation was voluntary and confidential;
- (2) that there was minimal risk to involvement;
- (3) that they could decline to answer any question or end their involvement at any point;
- (4) that their full names would not appear on any research finding (use of first names only or pseudonym first names would be used, as each requested);
- (5) that coding would be used in data analysis to ensure confidentiality;
- (6) what was expected from the participant, including how much time will be required of them.

Prior to beginning data collection, the researcher provided each participant with a debriefing statement that clarified the purpose of the research effort and provided a reassurance of confidentiality in the handling of all research data.

Data collection is the use of a specific set of procedures and techniques aimed at getting the best information available (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). These procedures and techniques reflected the type of inquiry that the researcher had chosen to best address the research problem. In-depth interviews are one of the strategies that was used for data collection. Martinson and O'Brien (2010) describe interviewing as one of the most important sources of case study information. Qualitative interviewing uses open-ended questions that allow for individual variation. Patton (2015) identifies three types of qualitative interviewing: 1) informal, conversational interviews; 2) semi-structured interviews; and 3) standardized, open-ended

interviews. In this study, the researcher used characteristics from the semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is one in which the researcher prepares questions prior to the interview but has the authority to deviate from his or her interview protocol based on participants' responses (Glesne, 2011). This format allowed the researcher to have a list of questions or topics that the interviewer used to guide the interview (See Appendix A and B). The questions or topics the researcher has chosen will ensure that certain information is attained, but there are no pre-determined responses and it allows the researcher to probe and explore within those predetermined areas of inquiry (Hoepfl, 1997). Becker et al. (2012) noted that in qualitative descriptive research such as case studies, researchers will begin with one or several questions to drive the inquiry. These questions will influence important factors the researcher will be looking for during the data collection, and may cause new factors to emerge. Merriam and Simpson (2000) noted that the interview technique can create an environment for greater depth. A researcher can obtain information that otherwise may not be able to be obtained simply by encouragement and establishing good rapport with the participants. All subject interviewed were asked the same set of questions in the same order, to create some consistency and connection, considering they were all conducted separately.

To collect interview data, the researcher held one semi-structured interview with each participant. Each session lasted approximately one hour in length, and took place over the course of two months at locations preferable to the participants. The researcher used a list of questions that guided the semi-structured interview (see Appendix A). The researcher voice recorded each interview, in addition to taking written notes during the interview, with the permission of the participants. By recording the interview, it allowed the researcher to focus

more what was being discussed during the interview. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher in a word-for-word format for analysis.

After all semi-structured interviews were completed, as well as the data transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes, the researcher conducted a focus group with all the participating subjects. Babbie (2004) found that the dynamics of an assembled group can draw out facets of a subject that may not emerge in the interview process. The participants included two student-athletes from each of the sports participating, so the researcher divided the larger group into two smaller groups, with one student-athlete per sport in each group. This allowed for more openness amongst the participants. The focus group lasted approximately an hour and a half, at a setting of the group's choice. During this time, the researcher asked questions that aided in gathering more evidence and were based on the main themes that were identified through analysis of the data collected through the initial semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B). The researcher voice recorded each focus group session, so that the researcher could focus more on what was being discussed. As with the semi-structured interviews, the researcher transcribed the data in the same way for analysis.

A final form of data collection used in this research study was photo elicitation. Photo elicitation is simply inserting a photograph into a research interview. Harper (2002) states that images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words since part of the brain that processes visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words. Harper (2002) goes on to state that a photo elicitation interview can elicit a different kind of information, not just more information. "Photo elicitation also can overcome the difficulties posed by in-depth interviewing

because it is anchored in an image that is understood, at least in part, by both parties” (Harper, 2002). The researcher used photo elicitation during the focus group sessions. The participants were shown various photos and asked to share their interpretation and thoughts (See Appendix C). The photos used depicted various relational situations that can be interpreted different ways by the individuals, based on their experiences and what they have witnessed in athletics.

Examples of what the photos entailed are: athletes encouraging one another with physical gestures, the coach in a huddle with the players, an athlete showing confident or positive body language, two guys helping a young boy ride a bike, a coach with her hand on a player’s shoulder, athletes competing with looks of determinations on their faces, and an athlete with a frustrated look on her face. The information shared by the participants was voice recorded, so that the researcher could focus on the responses. It was later transcribed, coded, and analyzed along with the other data collected.

Data Analysis

What verbal interactions a researcher collects and how they decide to analyze this material can vary, depending on the purpose and the theoretical framework of the research study (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Patton (2015) stated that qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data, which means that critical themes emerge out of the data collected. Qualitative analysis has been defined as working with data, organizing it, and breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, and searching for patterns within the data. This data analysis process includes discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and then deciding what you will share with others (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory is the theoretical framework that frames the methodology in this study. The basic principle of social constructivism is that individuals require social interaction to achieve full

cognitive development. Individuals will try to make sense of the world around them, and will create subjective meanings of the experiences they have. Josselson's (1987) research focused on a woman's identity in a social context, and recognized how different roles impact their lives. The female perspective was focused on in this study, and gave more insight to their specific experiences and the influences they encounter while participating in intercollegiate athletics. In addition, Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model helps to frame the methodology in this study, as there will be a focus on the influences present during the experiences the female intercollegiate student-athletes are having. By exploring the possible influences on the leadership identity development of student-athletes, as well as their experiences, a better understanding might be gained pertaining to the attributes, behaviors, and relational approaches of those individuals seen as leaders. This is what guided the questions that aided the gathering of data.

Once the data was collected, the researcher began the data analysis process. Content analysis is the systematic analysis of communication, whether is it formatted as visual, aural, or in printed form (Merriam and Simpson, 2000). A theme, a phrase, or sentence is typically the unit of content for analysis. For this study, the method of analysis the researcher used is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process that involves searching for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2013) state that thematic analysis is suited for a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives, and can be used as a very basic method because:

- (a) it works with a wide range of research questions, from those about people's experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts;

- (b) it can be used to analyze different types of data, from secondary sources such as media to transcripts of focus groups or interviews;
- (c) it works with large or small data-sets;
- (d) it can be applied to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses. (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 120)

Thematic analysis consists of six stages, which can be a recursive process. Multiple phases can be worked on without completion of one before moving to the next. These stages are:

- (1) *Familiarization with the data.* Common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data (and listening to audio-recorded data at least once, if relevant) and noting any initial analytic observations.
- (2) *Coding.* This involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding is not simply a method of data reduction, it is also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.
- (3) *Searching for themes.* A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the relevant to the research question. If codes are the bricks and tiles in a brick-and-tile house, then themes are the walls and roof panels. Searching for themes is a bit like coding your codes to identify similarity in the data. This 'searching' is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes. The researcher ends this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

- (4) *Reviewing themes*. Involves checking that the themes ‘work’ in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data-set. The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. It may be necessary to collapse two themes together or to split a theme into two or more themes, or to discard the candidate themes altogether and begin again the process of theme development.
- (5) *Defining and naming themes*. Requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme (the researcher should ask ‘What story does this theme tell?’ and ‘How does this theme fit into the overall story about the data?’), identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.
- (6) *Writing up*. Writing is an integral element of the analytic process in Thematic Analysis. Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

In this study, the researcher utilized the thematic analysis process to code the data from the in-depth interview and voice recording, as well as categorized the data, and defined the specific themes that emerged. It will begin with open coding, which is the process of identifying themes from the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During the open coding process, the researcher identified and named conceptual categories in which the phenomenon was grouped. The goal was to group words, phrases, and events that appeared similar in specific categories. These categories were then modified or replaced along the way. The next stage of analysis

involves the re-examination of the categories identified to see how they are linked, which is called axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During axial coding, the researcher had to build a conceptual model and determine if sufficient data had been gathered to support the interpretation. Lastly, the researcher will translate the conceptual model into the storyline that will be read to the reader (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During the analysis process, the stages could be occurring simultaneously and repeatedly (Hoepfl, 1997). By working through this process, the researcher was able to determine if the influences present in Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model were present in the experiences of the female intercollegiate student-athletes.

After the data analysis process, the researcher reported the case study findings. This was a complex process as this approach yielded quite a bit of information. The report needed to be easily read and understood by the reader. Baxter and Jack (2008) noted that the goal of the report is to describe the study in such a way to enable the reader to feel as if they were an active participant in the research and can determine if the findings could be applied to their own situation. It was important to describe the specific context in which the phenomenon was taking place when explaining the phenomenon itself. Baxter and Jack (2008) also stated that “to fully understand the findings they are compared and contrasted to what can be found in published literature to situate the new data into preexisting data” (p. 555). The researcher used Yin’s (2003) comparative structure to report the case study findings. A comparative structure allowed the researcher to repeat the same case study material two or more times, comparing alternative descriptions or explanations of the same case (Yin, 2003). This is a constructivist approach, where the perspective came from different participants, and presented multiple realities.

Trustworthiness

It was important, with subjectivity involved, to take steps to ensure that the research was trustworthy. Merriam and Simpson (2000) stated that the trustworthiness of data is dependent on the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the research process. In qualitative research, the researcher becomes more of the instrument of the data collection, so validity is an internal matter to the individual researcher. Trustworthiness leads to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in research (Guba, 1981). Table 3 describes possible provisions that may be made by a qualitative researcher wishing to address specific criteria for trustworthiness.

Table 3

Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness

Quality criterion	Possible provisions made by the researcher
Credibility	Use of appropriate, well recognized research methods Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations/environment Random sampling of individuals serving as informants Triangulation via use of different methods; use different types of informants and different sites Tactics to help ensure honesty and ethics from informants Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues Negative case analysis Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors Peer scrutiny of research project Use of "reflective commentary"

Table 3 (Continued)

Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness

Quality criterion	Possible provisions made by the researcher
	Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher; provide subjectivity statement
	Member checks of data collected and interpretations formed
	Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny
	Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and thick detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of "overlapping methods"
	In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated in the future
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias
	Admission of researcher's beliefs and assumptions
	Recognition of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects
	In-depth methodological thick description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinized
	Use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail"

Note. This table is an adaptation of information presented as ways to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.

To ensure credibility in this research study, the researcher appropriated well recognized research methods, developed early familiarity of the culture in which the data was extracted, used tactics to ensure honesty from participants, and included peer scrutiny. The researcher also provided a description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher, conducted

member checks of data collected and interpretations, as well provided a thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny. The member checks allowed the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy. Lauckner, Paterson, and Krupa (2012) stated that a detailed description of the setting and interactions aims to provide readers with adequate information for them to feel they have vicariously “experienced” the case. The member checks occurred after the individual semi-structured interview had been transcribed, and then again after the focus group had been conducted and transcribed. The researcher emailed each individual and had them review the transcription for accuracy. Thick description can contribute to the transferability of the study. In this study, the researcher provided a thick description as well as a thorough description of the context in which the study was conducted. To ensure dependability, the researcher provided an in-depth methodological description to allow the study to be repeated. Lastly, to ensure confirmability in this study, any admission of beliefs and assumptions of the researcher was addressed, as well as recognition of shortcomings in the study’s methods and their potential effects.

Subjectivity Statement

Because the research study is qualitative in nature, it was important to address subjectivity. In qualitative research, phenomena experiences are being described and explained. These studies analyze phenomena appealing to subjective ways of knowing, to gain insight and understanding. It was important to address my role as the researcher and my interest in the leadership identity development of female intercollegiate athletes.

I have been involved in intercollegiate athletics for over 24 years, which includes four years as a student-athlete, three years as an assistant coach, and the remainder as a head coach. I have always played or coached at the Division 1 level, and the sport that I played and currently

coach is softball. I have experienced the ups and downs of playing and competing, both from a player's perspective and a coach's perspective. When I look back on my playing experiences to determine if there were any missing links and how my experience could have been better, it would be to have had a better understanding of how my leadership identity was being formed. I am a leader now, and have been for many years as a coach, and can see where that leader identity was forming as I competed in intercollegiate athletics. It was being formed based on the influences of my coaches and my peers, from the reflective learning that took place after competition or practice, and through the meaningful involvement of playing with a group of people and at that level. When I began coaching, I made sure to implement activities or lessons with my team that would teach them about leadership skills and what it means to work around others for common purposes. I wanted them to have a better understanding than I did about leadership development. So, over the past 16 years I have taken my student-athletes through a leadership program based on a book by Jeff Jansen, a leading sports psychologist and owner of the Jansenn's Sport Leadership Center. The book is titled *The Captain's Leadership Manual*, and it discusses the components of leading by example and vocally. For example, it discusses the topic of commitment and not only assesses their own thoughts about themselves, but also how others view them. It addresses different levels of commitment and what they are defined as. It goes on to challenge each individual to decide what level they desire to be at and specific ways they will get there. Through my role as their coach and mentor, I want to be a positive influence, and I want the student-athletes to understand how much of an influence they are to each other. There is so much an individual can benefit from in being a part of a group. It can challenge you and frustrate you, but it can also be comforting and meaningful. I also try to encourage my

athletes to reflect on all that they do and say, how they perform and why they are getting the results they are getting, whether it is on the field, in the classroom, or in their relationships.

There has been quite a bit of research done on leadership, and even in intercollegiate athletics, but I was really drawn to Komives et al.'s (2004, 2005, 2006) research, and more specifically the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (2005), because I feel that the identified developmental influences do play a part in a student-athletes leader identity development. I know that each athlete is impacted by different influences and has different experiences; however, overall I think there are specific pieces that are consistent throughout. I believe that if I can conduct valid research to determine if these influences and their experiences as an intercollegiate athlete do affect the leadership identity development in the female student-athlete, then there can be further research conducted to support the application of the Leadership Identity Development Grounded Theory (Komives et al., 2004) and the LID model (Komives et al., 2005) with intercollegiate athletics. With that knowledge, programs can be developed within athletic departments to help educate student-athletes, and ultimately help aid in the growth of leadership skills within them and affect their surrounding environments. The more student-athletes that can be guided and given the knowledge and support they need through this development process, the better they can be prepared for impactful roles on their respective teams and for life after athletics.

My sample came from the same institution that I work for, which is a mid-size institution in the mid-south that competes at the NCAA Division 1 level. It was easier for me to access the participants for this study by sampling from my own institution. Having closer access to the participants, I conducted the two in-person, in-depth interviews at the convenience of the participants. I am a coach at this university, and have been here for over four years, so I have a

good relationship with the other coaches. I did not want the athletes to feel that they were required to participate in this study, and that if they did not desire to participate there would be repercussions from their coach. I asked each coach to provide any names of individuals that fit the criteria listed in the methodology section of my study. I did not need to follow up with the coach for any reason, even if their student-athlete decided not to participate in the study, so the coaches did not know from me who participated. Also, I addressed confidentiality with each student-athlete more than once to ensure that they felt safe to speak freely. They were told that their names would not be on any findings from the study, as well.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test out the researcher's approach and to identify any possible details that needed to be addressed before more data was collected. The researcher used a qualitative, explanatory, single case study methodology. Criteria sampling procedures were used in determining the eight participants for the pilot study. The participants were all female Olympic sport student-athletes that had participated in intercollegiate athletics for at least one year. A total of four Olympic sports were represented. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant, consisting of ten open-ended questions, which was voice recorded and did not last over one hour in length. The researcher utilized the thematic analysis process to code the data from the in-depth interview and voice recording, as well as categorize the data, and define the specific themes that emerged. The researcher was able to determine if the influences present in Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model were present in the experiences of the female intercollegiate student-athletes. The findings were reported through a comparative structure that allowed the researcher to repeat the same case study material two or more times, comparing alternative descriptions or explanations of the same case (Yin, 2003).

The data retrieved from the interviews of the sample of eight female intercollegiate student-athletes showed that 1) the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athlete, 2) the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development, and 3) the processes of being a female student-athlete contribute to this leadership identity development.

Based on the pilot study, the researcher felt that the appropriate data and amount of information needed to support the research questions could be done through the methodology that has been established. The researcher planned to add two more Olympic student-athletes for the research study from the sport of Volleyball.

Summary

Qualitative researchers have a responsibility to discover and interpret the importance of what they observe, and of establishing a legitimate connection between what is observed and the conclusions drawn in the final report (Hoepfl, 1997). Merriam and Simpson (2000) described the case study as a useful methodology for exploring an area that has not been well researched or conceptualized. Before generalizations can be made and tested, there needs to be in-depth describing and understanding of a phenomenon. Case studies provide the opportunity to do just that, so that generalizations and conceptualizations can be formed and guide future research (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

A broad understanding of student development and leadership development, as well as a focus on leadership identity development, structured this research study. The Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (Komives et al., 2005) identified five categories that influence the development of a leadership identity through six stages. These categories include:

1) a broadening view of leadership, 2) developing self, 3) group influences, 4) developmental influences, and 5) a changing view of oneself with others. For this study, I focused on the category of developing influences. These developing influences include: 1) adult influence, 2) peer influence, 3) meaningful involvement, and 4) reflective learning. These developing influences highlighted aspects of the participants' intercollegiate athletic experiences and guided the themes derived from data analysis. In the following chapters, detailed information on the research participants is presented, as well as the findings that emerged from the data that was gathered. The researcher closes with final conclusions and recommendations for further research and practice.

Chapter 4

Biographical and Background Information of Research Participants

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of and influences on female intercollegiate student-athlete's leadership identity development through the participation in intercollegiate athletics. By gaining a better understanding of these experiences, the researcher was able to determine the significance of Komives' LID model's developmental influences. As previously mentioned, the LID model's developmental influences were extremely critical to changing how one thought of self and others and moving into the more complex identity stages (Komives et al., 2006). The researcher used qualitative research methods and more specifically a single-case, exploratory case study to provide a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Working through a social constructivist lens, the findings from the data created new understanding of female leadership identity development influenced by participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism basic principle is that individuals require social interaction to achieve full cognitive development. Individuals will try to make sense of the world around them, and will create subjective meanings of the experiences they have. In this study, female intercollegiate athletes had experiences and interacted with others while being involved in intercollegiate athletics. This study sought to determine if these relationship interactions, as well as experiences of participating in intercollegiate athletics, aided in the growth of their leadership identity development.

To gain the knowledge needed for this study, the researcher used qualitative methods. Khan (2014) stated that qualitative research is based upon both the observations and interpretations of people's perception of varying events, and will take a snapshot of people's

perceptions in a natural setting. Each participant's experiences and interactions varied from the others, so it was better to use qualitative methods to explore the significance of each of the developmental influences in Komives' LID model (Komives et al., 2015). This approach allowed the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of how growth took place in their lives while competing in intercollegiate athletics.

The researcher in this study used a constructivist epistemology as a guide, as Crotty (1998, pp. 8-9) stated that meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. This also guided the researcher's decision to utilize an explanatory case study, focusing on establishing cause-and-effect relationships, describing which causes produce which effects (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). In this study, the researcher hoped to determine what specific experiences and influences influenced (cause) leadership identity development to develop (effect) in female intercollegiate student-athletes.

Since the application of Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model has not been previously applied to intercollegiate athletics, the researcher chose to look in-depth at a specific context. Therefore, the researcher chose the single-case design as it is appropriate when the case represents a "critical" test of a theory, when the case serves a revelatory purpose, or when there is a rare and unique circumstance that need to be studied (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010). Since this project serves as introductory research, a smaller sample was useful in determining if the tools of inquiry were effective in gaining the proper understanding needed to answer the research questions. This study used only female, Olympic sport athletes from one urban, mid-size, mid-south university. Therefore, the researcher used criteria sampling procedures. Patton (2015) describes criteria sampling as a process of selecting or searching based on specific criteria. The

female, Olympic sport student-athletes from this university were identified as potential participants by the coaches of their respective sports who worked with the student-athletes daily and could recommend student-athletes based on specific criteria. Once the specific possible participants were identified, the researcher emailed everyone, inviting them to be a part of the research study. If the individual was interested in being a part of the study, the researcher moved forward with setting up a possible date and location for the initial interview and the focus group.

The researcher gathered data from three sources. They were: a semi-structured interview, a focus group, and photo elicitation. This triangulation method ensured that the findings were rich, comprehensive, robust, and well-developed. Glesne (2011) noted that a semi-structured interview is one in which the researcher prepares questions prior to the interview but has the authority to deviate from his or her interview protocol based on participants' responses. Both the first interview with each participant, as well as the focus group, utilized the semi-structured interview method. It allowed the researcher to have topics and questions to direct the interview and focus group, but also allowed for deviation from those questions based on the participant's answers and shared thoughts. The focus group was used because the dynamics of an assembled group can draw out facets of a subject that may not emerge in the interview process. (Babbie, 2004) Photo elicitation was used as a source of data because it can elicit a different kind of information, not just more information. It also can help the researcher overcome the difficulties posed by in-depth interviewing because it is anchored in an image that is understood, at least in part, by both parties. (Harper, 2002)

There was a total of ten participants interviewed during the first semi-structured interview. The ten participants were then divided into two focus groups of five participants, with each sport only represented once in each of the two groups. This was executed so that the

participants could speak freely and not be concerned with how their thoughts were portrayed by their teammate. The participant's answers and thoughts from the semi-structured one-on-one interview and the focus group, which included the photo elicitation, were voice recorded.

There were ten participants interviewed for this study. The following is a description of each participant, identified by a pseudonym (see Table 4), as well as why they chose to become a Division 1 athlete. This section also discusses the thoughts that they shared regarding their view of leadership, what they have learned about leadership because of their involvement in intercollegiate athletics, the uniqueness of leadership opportunities in intercollegiate athletics, as well as how important the relationships they form are to their leadership experiences.

Piper. Piper has competed in intercollegiate cross country/track and field for three years. She became a D1 athlete because she felt it was a natural thing to do, and since she was international it was the best decision for her as an athlete and a student. Since joining her team, Piper feels that she thinks less of herself and more about her teammates. As a track athlete, it can be very individualized, but in college you gain points by working together as a team, so her focus has changed. Competing in intercollegiate athletics has changed the way she relates to others. Before coming to college, she would complain about a loss and focus solely on herself. Once she became a student-athlete in college, she became more aware of her teammates, trying to be encouraging and focusing less on herself.

Piper's thoughts about leadership/leader are that "a leader is not only a person who excels in their sport or whatever they're doing but they're also a person who is really caring towards everybody who is around them and they put other people's priorities as important." Piper feels like the term leadership is defined different in the context of athletics than in other types of involvement. She feels like in most work environments, there is a boss and someone is above

another. In athletics, she feels like it is more like family and everyone is equal and trying to care for each other and help out. Since Piper has become an intercollegiate athlete, she has learned that there are different types of leaders. “I always thought that leaders were those people that were very vocal and present, and I have learned that there are those leaders that are less vocal and more about action. You might be quieter but you just show your hard work and that way might inspire people.” Piper feels that what has helped her learn the most about leaders is just being on the team and going through hard times and easier times, as well as winning and losing together.

Sharon. Sharon has participated in intercollegiate golf for two years. Sharon became a D1 athlete because of her father. She played a different sport and quit. Her father told her she was going to play some type of sport because he wasn’t going to pay for her college education. Since she began competing at the intercollegiate level, she feels as though she has become more understanding and more patient with people. “Everyone has different personalities and everyone reacts differently and learns differently, so you have to learn how to interact with people differently and in different situations.” How Sharon relates to others has changed also. She now understands that it doesn’t matter so much how people get to the point if everyone has the same goals and that they are genuine. Things don’t have to be accomplished just one way.

This student-athlete’s thoughts about leadership are as follows:

How I define leadership is being able to learn how to create the best atmosphere for the people that you are around and try to help everyone cope the same, not in the same way, but cope and get to the same point. Everyone goes through things differently and everyone has different personalities; leadership means establishing those different personalities and knowing that they are different and no one is ever going to do the same

thing the same way. I don't really think leadership is when you show up to practice and there is one person who is like, 'Okay, were going to do this and this and this and this;' that is more so what a coach should do, which coaches are leaders as well, there to help with the emotions, to help with the mental aspect and to help everyone work towards the same goal. In leadership, if you get people on the same page and have them working towards the same goal you're not going to fail because everyone wants the same thing. You've got to figure out how to do that. You also must figure out how to get everyone motivated, which is hard.

Sharon feels that everyone has a chance to be a leader in this environment, if they take advantage of that opportunity. She sees a lot of leadership in D1 athletics because to compete at this level you must be strong and take responsibility and have initiative. She feels that the term leadership is defined different in the context of athletics than in other types of involvement because in athletics everyone is basically doing the same thing regardless of their position. "Even in organizations on campus, you have a president, vice president, etc. where there are different roles executing their parts at different times with different expectations. In athletics, everyone is doing the same things. So, when a leadership role comes into play, it is more pronounced because you can tell when someone is standing out, or taking extra initiative." Sharon has had experiences that have occurred which have helped her learn more about leaders since she has become involved in intercollegiate athletics. Her team went through a conflict, a falling out where someone hollered at another teammate. This is the kind of thing that can really affect a team. In this situation, certain people stepped up to manage the conflict, talk to each individual, and find a solution so that situations like that do not become a major issue or happen again.

Jane. Jane has participated in intercollegiate soccer for one year. She became a DI athlete because she felt as though it was the best decision for her academically, as well as to compete at this level so that she can continue to grow and keep doors open for her future since she is an international student. Jane feels she has changed since becoming an intercollegiate athlete due to playing with teammates from other states and countries, as well as different levels of maturity. She has had to deal with teammates that are not as mature as her and learn to communicate well with them and hold them accountable, all without getting impatient. Working with teammates from other cultures has challenged this athlete. She has learned that relating to others means she must try to understand that everyone may be a different age and from a different background, so she needs to learn how each person will react in situations. “Not everyone is going to progress at the same pace and sometimes you have people who need more time to work on certain aspects of their game, or more time to focus on tactical stuff. Not everyone moves towards the goal at the same pace but as long as we are all working toward the same goal as a team then we have a better chance to succeed.”

Jane’s thoughts about leadership are as follows:

I think that for me leadership is being able to gather a lot of people and make sure we are all on the same page working towards that same goal. It is being sure that the chemistry is manageable and that everyone can interact without any conflict. So, I feel as a leader you can influence the way the team works and make sure the chemistry within the team is good as well.

From her experiences, she has learned that teams do not usually have just one leader. Actually, the more that they have, the better off the team usually is because these individuals are really goal oriented and work hard. It sets a good example for the rest of the team, who begin to apply

those same things and it makes the team better. Jane feels that the term leadership is defined differently in the context of athletics rather than in other areas of involvement because in athletics leadership is earned. In a workplace, the position is given to you so you will behave a certain way and do a certain job. In athletics you are in a leadership position because you continue to earn it daily, and you can lose it at any point. This student-athlete's experiences as an intercollegiate athlete have helped her learn more about leaders. Her freshman year those considered their leaders were not putting the newcomers in a position to buy into the program. "It was a rough year for the team, culture wise we were not on the same page and the leadership was not where it needed to be. The following year, new leaders emerged and they have stepped up for our team. Everyone is building onto that new culture and the growth is tremendous, with more working to lead and contribute to the whole."

Caroline. Caroline has participated in intercollegiate tennis for three years. She became a D1 athlete because she didn't want to choose between going pro or furthering her education, so she combined competing with going to school. Caroline feels that she has changed since becoming an intercollegiate athlete. She now puts her team first over her own individual needs, as well as looks out for the other team members to see how they are doing. This athlete also understands the team concept more, as you can only win as a team if your whole team is strong. Caroline feels that she has learned more about relating to others in this environment.

It has been good to see that there are so many other athletes that go through the same struggle that you go through, whether it is with a coach or just managing time and doing these things right and just having other people around you that do the same. I think it just made me realize that no matter what, you are not alone and you can always rely on

people. It also put things in perspective that there are always other people who have a much bigger struggle going on than you.

Caroline has specific thoughts about leadership.

I think it's not necessarily that the leader is shining. It is more like the leader helps the other people to grow and shine and help them push other teammates to be better people. They put themselves second place sometimes. Yeah, they do a lot of things: giving advice, giving direction sometimes, and being a role model by the way they are. If other people see the leaders working hard, doing everything they can, it will encourage them too.

She has learned that there are different types of leaders, ones who speak out more and then ones that set a good example for others. Some leaders are more encouraging than others. This student-athlete also has learned that it is not always easy being a leader as it puts you in some tough situations having to deal with communication between coaches and players. Caroline feels that the term leadership is defined different in the context of athletics than in other types of involvement. "In the normal work environment, having someone positioned over you can create a different vibe where you can't have a voice if you disagree. In athletics, you are all close in age and are all working towards the same things, so you can give your input even if you don't agree with the leader." She has learned about leaders through some tougher moments as an athlete. "It was the year we had a lot of adversity on the team. We were struggling with injuries, problems with players and personal issues. I would say that as a team we came out of it as a team on top of it because everyone learned from it. Being together and experiencing everyday conflicts helped us grow."

Isabella. Isabella has participated in intercollegiate soccer for one year. She decided to become a D1 athlete because she wanted to compete at the highest level of competition she could. She feels that she hasn't changed much since becoming an intercollegiate athlete, as she attended a boarding school that created an environment like the college experience. Isabella has learned more about relating to people, however. "You can't just assume things about people when they come from different home lives and different situations. I have noticed that a lot with teammates you are quick to assume and judge things and then you have to back up and realize that not everyone is coming from the same environment and not used to this." She believes that leadership is "leading by example, being a good example for people, and being someone that your teammates could go to." Because of her involvement in intercollegiate athletics, this student-athlete has learned that leaders on the team are people that are always focused on the goal and don't stray from that. They are also very dedicated to their team. Isabella feels that leadership can be seen the same in the athletic context as it can be in other environments. She feels that leaders have the same qualities no matter where they are or what they are a part of. The athlete has learned about leaders through her experiences as an athlete, from how her coaches communicate with her and share with her about how to be the best for the team. She also has watched poor examples of leaders, which has shown her quite a bit as well.

Presley. Presley has participated in intercollegiate tennis for two years. She chose to play D1 athletics because it is the highest competitive level and she is striving for the best. She has changed since becoming involved in intercollegiate athletics. She was used to training alone or with guys, so now she relates better to females and feels like she has sisters by her side. She also has become a more disciplined individual. Presley has learned to relate better to people since becoming involved in intercollegiate athletics. Tennis can be a very individualized sport,

so playing on a team she has been able to see that she has misjudged others. She has realized that people are different from her and she has been quick to judge.

Presley stated specifics about her view of leadership.

What leadership means to me is that I don't put myself as number one, that I have other people I must lead. I have got to be an example, even if I fail. Nobody is perfect but I am learning from mistakes and not being so stubborn. It is also about being more mature and helping the younger people on my team whenever they need help. It is also about helping them even when they don't do something right, to hint and tell them that that is not okay.

I also see a big part of it as encouraging everyone.

She has learned that leaders are just normal people who are making a difference. They do not have to be older and much more experienced. Presley feels that a leader can be defined different in the athletics context than in other environments because in athletics it is a voluntary position and there can be multiple leaders, where in a normal job one person leads everyone. She has had a few experiences that have helped her learn about leaders. This athlete's coaches have shown trust in her, ask for her advice, and see her as a leader. She has also witnessed poor examples of leaders, as they did not care about the goals, the small details, or putting in hard work.

Kendall. Kendall has participated in intercollegiate golf for two years. She chose to play D1 sports because it would be challenging in a way that would push her to be better. Being a part of an intercollegiate team has changed the way she sees herself as a golfer. She used to be the best on her team and carry the team. Now, she is a part of a whole group of people who are capable and want to accomplish a lot. Kendall has learned to relate to others through this experience. Everyone is from a different place or culture, which is different than what she grew up around. It is also different being a part of a group instead of working a lot individually.

When asked what leadership means to her, Kendall stated that it's about "having each other's back and making sure that you can rely on your teammates and they can rely on you for different situations. It is also being able to push each other when needed, but also being able to call each other when needed." This environment has shown this athlete that a leader can be anyone on the team. It can be a freshman, which was her experience this past year. Kendall feels that a leader is defined different in an athletics context than in other environments, because in athletics you can be a leader in action without having to speak up and direct others. However, in most jobs leaders must speak up to lead. This student-athlete has learned what being a leader is about from former teammates that played for the program. The things they accomplished in the classroom and on the course were amazing, and it makes her want to step up and do better for myself and her team. It makes Kendall think that she can be whatever she wants to be.

Erin. Erin has participated in intercollegiate volleyball for three years. She became a D1 athlete because she followed in the path of her family. Her mom played volleyball, as well as her sister. Erin feels she has changed since becoming an intercollegiate athlete because in her previous experiences on teams, she wasn't around her teammates all the time like she is now. It changes who you are as a person and as a teammate when you form those relationships and must manage them. As an athlete, Erin has learned to relate to others better, and that comes from working to understand her teammates and their differences. "Everyone comes from a different background and has different personalities and so on a team you have to learn how each person is going to react to something, how you can confront or talk to another teammate. I may be able to yell at someone on the court, but with another teammate I may need to be gentler."

Erin thinks that leadership is not only represented in words, but also in action. For example,

being able to tell someone to do something and you have the actions to back it up. So, if I told Suzie to go do this, Suzie isn't going to question me because she knows that I am doing it too. It is also about trust and respect, being able to speak for your team and to your team, as well as representing my team on and off the court in the right ways.

She has learned that there are roles that leaders take on that go unnoticed. There are high expectations to not only do things right on the court but also off the court. They must handle conflicts, be responsible for others, and take care of themselves. Erin feels that leadership is defined differently in athletics than it is in other areas of involvement because you are not just given the leadership role. It has to be earned and because of this "the leaders are always working hard so they gain respect. So even if you disagree with them, you know it is probably the right thing because of all the hard work they have put in and that they weren't handed that position. In the work force, it would be hard to follow someone who isn't working hard daily to deserve respect but are positioned over you." Erin has recently learned more about leaders through a boot camp her team participated in with an organization called The Program. It requires different individuals on the team to step up and lead the team in instances to accomplish goals. It opened this student-athlete's eyes to what everyone had to bring to the team, and how different players can step up and lead the group in different ways. It took total involvement by everyone, each individual having responsibilities for helping the team, and encouragement from all. It showed them how challenging it is to lead, what it requires, and where their weaknesses are. She felt it was the best experience for their team.

Riley. Riley has participated in intercollegiate volleyball for two years. She chose to play D1 athletics because she watched others get to that level and felt that if she worked hard enough she could do the same. She also felt it would be better for her future if she could gain

scholarship to compete and not have to get in debt. Riley feels that since joining the team she has gained more confidence and has become more open to new things and different people. This experience has opened her eyes and helped her grow. This athlete has learned to relate to others that are not exactly like her, able to find common ground and grow relationships that are valuable and lasting. Her and her teammates appreciate the differences and want to maintain those differences while working together and getting to know each other.

When Riley reflected on what being a leader is about, she stated that

it is how people see you, how they feel about you and how you present yourself to them, if you can take control of the situation, if they look up to you or look to you in good situations and bad situations as a consistent positive role model. They are some who others count on in the bad situations and know you won't make things worse. This person will help you try to work through issues, whatever they are.

She has learned that everyone has a different way of leading, whether it is a person who leads by example, by being vocal on the court, by being there for others, or by managing conflict. Riley sees a leader being defined differently in an athletic context than in a different environment. "In a work situation there is the one leader who organizes everything and tells you what to do. And in athletics, it is not always necessarily like that, and I wouldn't define a leader on a team as a dictator or someone who runs the team. I think of them as someone who steps up and pushes the team in one direction towards a goal, but it could be a bunch of them doing it." She also feels that her whole experience here has helped her learn more about leaders. Riley's coaches have encouraged her to lead, as well as advised her as to how she can improve.

Lauren. Lauren has participated in intercollegiate cross country/track & field for two years. She decided to compete in D1 athletics because in Canada they do not have that level of

competition in college. It also provides financially for her education. This experience can provide a way for her to get more experience and get some future opportunities. Since joining her team, Lauren feels she has become more confident and can relate better to people. It teaches you to work outside of yourself, dealing with so many personalities and different types of people. She feels that she has learned to “approach everyone with a positive attitude and not expect them to be a certain way because if you do then it can tend to push them down into a little pocket. Whereas, if you just let them be themselves and expect nothing, then your friendship can grow on what you have instead of what you think it should become.”

To Lauren, leadership is directing others in a positive way. It doesn't necessarily have to be like a leader standing up and telling another to get up and go do this or that. It can be a teammate encouraging someone else. Or it could be them coming up and giving it their all and demonstrating what people need to do to be their best, whether it is on or off the field. It is getting involved and doing all these things, having positive characteristics, not always putting themselves first, and being determined people.

She has learned that leaders can come in any form and can show up wherever they are needed. There will be some that are going to be prominent because they speak up well, but others who will just step up and do a job quietly. Leaders will do a lot of the little things right and at the right moment. Lauren feels that leadership is universal mostly, whether it is in an athletic context or another environment. You can have certain attributes and characteristics that are going to apply anywhere. Through participation in intercollegiate athletics, she has been able to see the impact that people can have and the growth that can take place.

Table 4

Description of Participants

Name	Years of Intercollegiate Experience	Sport
Piper	3	Cross Country/Track & Field
Sharon	2	Golf
Jane	1	Soccer
Caroline	3	Tennis
Isabella	1	Soccer
Presley	2	Tennis
Kendall	2	Golf
Erin	3	Volleyball
Riley	2	Volleyball
Lauren	2	Cross Country/Track & Field

Chapter 5

Findings

Interview Themes

As described in Chapter 3, the data in this study was analyzed using the thematic analysis process to code the data from the in-depth interview and voice recording, as well as categorize the data, and define the specific themes that emerged. This process began with open coding, which is the process of identifying themes from the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During the open coding process, the researcher identified and named conceptual categories in which the phenomenon was grouped. The goal was to group words, phrases, and events that appeared similar in specific categories. Then, the researcher moved to axial coding, which involved seeing how the categories were linked. This eventually created a clear picture of the critical themes, if they were significant, and to what degree. The focus group interview data was processed the same way. The data from the photo elicitation was transcribed and evaluated for information to support the evidence of the developmental influences and processes that contribute to the development of leadership identity. This study was conducted to identify the significance of specific themes related to the developmental influences present in Komives et. al.'s (2005) Leadership Identity Development (LID) model. This, in turn, aided in determining if 1) the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athlete, 2) the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development, and 3) the processes of being a female student-athlete contribute to this leadership identity development.

The experiences of the ten female Olympic sport student-athletes ultimately fit within five major themes. The five themes that emerged showed significant presence from the data that was gathered. The themes that emerged were Support, Accountability, Providing Direction, Encourages Problem-Solving, and Challenging and Competitive Environment. These themes exhibited the significance of the developmental influences, as well as the impact of the process of participating in intercollegiate athletics, are: 1) peer influence, 2) adult influence, 3) meaningful involvement, 4) reflective learning, and 5) process. The data from this research effort provides strong evidence of peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. Not only that, there was strong evidence that the normal processes of participating in intercollegiate athletics contributed to growth in their leadership identity. The themes and thematic categories are detailed below in Table 5.

Table 5

Identified Themes in Participant One-on-One Interviews and Focus Groups

Themes	Categories
1) Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Meaningful Relationships b) Sense of Community c) Builds Confidence d) Similar Experiences e) Encouragement
2) Challenging and Competitive Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Push Each Other b) Competition c) Challenging Environment
3) Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reliance on One Another b) Reliance on each other for Success c) Part of the Whole
4) Providing Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Providing Direction b) Help See Future c) Role Modeling

Table 5 (Continued)

Identified Themes in Participant One-on-One Interviews and Focus Groups

Themes	Categories
5) Encourages Problem-Solving	a) Manage Conflict b) Manage Relationships c) Communication

Interview Theme 1: Support

The theme Support emerged in different ways. The athletes felt support from their teammates during their experiences as an intercollegiate athlete. That support helped them build confidence within. They have also gained confidence from others believing in them and encouraging them. The research participant discussed that support, at times, is due to meaningful relationships and feeling a sense of community. The support came from peers, adults, and participating in meaningful involvement.

The relationships that are formed during the participation in intercollegiate participation can impact student-athletes in so many ways. These relationships can become very meaningful, provide support, and build confidence. These athletes are going through similar experiences, so they can make a real difference in the growth of another individual's identity. Piper talked about how her teammates were her best friends and they have been there for her through the good times and the bad times. "We hang out together, we go for runs together, and if something is wrong we call each other and we just talk to each other. They are like the main thing in my life." Lauren spoke about how her teammates make her feel. "I feel loved and more comfortable and so that I can be myself. So, in a way that helps my confidence and I can be a better leader."

Piper also feels like those meaningful relationships allow for teammates to support and push one another to become better. When she got here, she realized that if she put in the effort

she “could go so much farther and everybody around me has shown me it is that way and they have supported me in a way that I have never seen before.” Piper feels that these meaningful relationships are ones not only built with teammates, but also coaches and trainers.

There are certain people on the team that I think are the actual leaders. They don’t compete athletically at my level but I think that they are the actual leaders and they’re really caring people that push me forward. But any experience that I have with this team, with running or competing, or experiences with coaches or trainers or teammates, have guided me towards being better. I think, so yeah, honestly any little situation has made me grow in that direction and made me think how I might, what is that next step and how I should take that step.

Riley talked about how much being a part of a team has meant to her. She is not alone going through this process. She has others that she can be there for and that she can count on.

Well, for us it is like a family. These girls are like some of my best friends that I have ever had. They are the best people that I have ever really met. I come from a small town and there is slim picking with true friends. Coming here it has been an eye opener. You realize who can be there for you. So, being on this team and in this sport, it has really brought a lot into my life. I know that I will always be friends with them and if I ever need something I can call them and talk. I have 18 other girls that are sitting there waiting to hang out and do something. So, it has basically given me a home away from home.

Presley views her teammates as family as well. “Since they’re like my sister they help me with everything if I have trouble or if I need help with homework or cooking or anything, they’ve been my friends and my family. They help me stay happy.”

Two of the participants of the study felt like the environment of intercollegiate athletics allowed for meaningful environment, where the student-athletes were around others who had similar experiences, where they could feel a sense of community, and one that allowed them to grow over time. Sharon discussed how being a part of a team, even though it has its positive and negative moments, allows her to be part of a group of people that she cares about.

My team, even though we have had ups and downs its very special to have that group of people that you know you're always going to know and never forget them, because you go through so much together and you play this gruesome sport. It's not gruesome on the outside but on the inside, it is so gruesome. You go through that together and you learn through it and the relationships you make with that, finding out how a friend should be and how you should be as a friend, is very meaningful because again in college you don't really get that. You have stresses from your school work or maybe your job that you have, but athletics is on such another level that it doesn't compare to anything. It just doesn't and I don't know how to explain it in a way, because of all the things you go through and you're going through the same exact things it's just, it's different.

Jane feels as though intercollegiate athletics creates an environment much like a community. "It means a lot because you get a team and it's like a big family and you need to stick together. Being able to have a big role with the team and being able to bring everyone together as one and helping the whole group stick together is very meaningful."

Riley has felt support through her peer relationships on her team, and now feels she can influence others.

The seniors now and the year before then, all those girls really worked hard and really pushed everyone to just exceed what our expectations were and so they showed me what

it was like to be a leader. They showed me what it was like to work hard. So, I guess that kind of reflects on how I want to be towards the younger girls. I know how it was when I first came in, driving 12.5 hours away and having nobody here. I had those girls that showed me everything and taught me everything, and I know that a lot of those girls are coming in feel the same way that I felt, feeling homesick or whatever. I wanted to step up for them and be there for them, support them, and guide them to what my other teammates guided me into.

Coaches can also be a good source of support and encouragement for the student-athletes. Caroline said “during my second and third year I have been really close with coach and he kind of encouraged me and he really believed in me more than I do. It eventually made me believe in myself more, and it shows you and makes you feel like you can really achieve more. I think that this has been a really important part that he believes so much in me and would tell me that, so I set higher bars for myself so I can achieve more.”

Presley discussed how her coaches have influenced her growth. She shared “I was the number one on the team this year and it helped me be a leader because I was the best one and coach trusted me. Also, when we communicate he would tell me a lot of stuff that I would in turn give to the team. Also, knowing that my coach knows that I am responsible and that he can count on me makes me believe I can lead people.” She goes on to discuss how she has been guided by her coaches and able to collaborate with them.

Jane has also felt that her coaches had confidence in her, which made a difference in her ability to grow as a leader.

The first meeting that I had with coach he told me, ‘You behave in a very professional way, and we need more of that in the team.’ And I told him that when I know that people

can trust me I can become my full self and I know that I can bring something to the team. I felt I could bring something good to the team. I may not be the best vocal leader though, as I'm not going to be the person that is going to talk the most. I knew that I wouldn't be the leader with all the components, but I knew that on certain realm I could be a certain leader and make sure the team goes forward. After that, I could be more confident and at that point I started to talk more and getting more involved with more people, trying to talk more. Like I said, I am French so I haven't spoken English forever but at that point I believed more in myself and I started to think that I could really make an impact.

Riley shared similar experiences about how her coaches have shown confidence in her and helped her to believe in her ability to be an effective leader.

My coaches really asked me to step into these leadership roles early on. She felt that I had that potential and that I could earn the respect of my teammates and show them the ways. So basically, it has completely built all the leadership that I have had. In high school I was a leader because of the position I was in on the team, but, I never really considered myself one. I never really spoke up, and now I feel I can.

Other support staff, such as trainers, are very influential in the student-athlete's lives. They are there with them daily, helping them through injuries and sicknesses. Many times, they counsel the student-athletes when they are struggling with things in their lives. Piper discusses how her trainer has been there for her. "Our trainer has 80 athletes so I try not to bother her too much. But she is honestly a great person to go and talk and she makes sure that I am okay and she is always taking care of all of us."

Presley feels that she has had support from the academic support staff when she most needed it, and now she feels more confident in her schoolwork. “When I first came here to the states, I was pretty lost in school and I had individuals who saw my potential and they kept me going and were so encouraging. Over time, I began to do better in school. They were very helpful.

In Komives’ (2005) grounded theory study, categories emerged that interacted to create a leadership identity. One of those categories is called Developing Self. This category includes a deepening self-awareness, establishing interpersonal efficacy, building self-confidence, applying new skills, and expanding motivation. Through the support given from peers and adults, student-athletes have the opportunity to develop their leadership identity.

Interview Theme 2: Challenging and Competitive Environment

As this theme emerged, it was evident that the participants were being challenged in many different ways through their experiences, relationships, and the environment. Some of those relationships are with peers, while others are with adults they interact with. They are pushed and challenged to be better, respond better, and deal with adversity. Piper shared that “every single situation I have been through until now has pushed me to be better and become better and to push forward in a hard, complicated way but gives good results.” Kendall stated that “Pretty much just being an athlete puts you in a position that you need to be a leader in some sort of way to succeed in your sport.”

There are many challenges athletes encounter while in this environment. Erin feels it is important to understand who she is so that she can figure out who she needs to be for her team. “I am not a vocal leader. I lead by example, so it is finding the balance for me of still leading by

example but thinking about ways that I can speak up when it is needed. I have to think about what needs to be said and how to say it because it is not what I do best.”

Kendall talked about how even though she feels pushed to be better, she feels supported by her teammates and feel that they have her back through the growth time.

Many of my teammates are outgoing with their leadership skills and I am quieter when it comes to being a leader and so they will just straight up come to us and be like, ‘hey this is what we need to do and this is how we are going to do it and I need you to work your butt off in what your game is specifically weak in and your whole game will become stronger,’ and that sort of thing. It has pushed me to become a better athlete in that way.

Having them behind my back helps a lot.

Kendall has been challenged by the same teammate to get out of her comfort zones and take steps forward in expressing herself and going to get what she wants. “Because I am not this huge outgoing person, she has helped me move forward in becoming more outgoing.” Sharon discussed a similar experience with her life skills coordinator as well.

He is just able to line up internships, job applications, help you with your resume or papers that you just wrote, because he’s so selfless. He will do anything for any of his athletes. All the community service opportunities that he gives every single athlete that are just at your fingertips, as well as the connections he helped me make, that just does not happen with just a regular person that is going to college. He wants you to build yourself and your resume so that you can be the best person that you can be when you get out of college. He genuinely cares, so the fact that I could go to college here and experience someone like that, make it very meaningful because you don’t get that ever. I mean some people do, but not at that level from what I’ve experienced.

The relationships with the adults they interact with during their intercollegiate career make a huge difference. Piper stated that “there has been a lot of key people that just challenged me in the right ways, to just grow and to make sure I was keeping on the right track.” Isabella feels her coach has challenged her to do things out of her comfort zone but it has made her grow overall as a person. “When someone does something wrong, coach has me go and talk to them. So, it is because of them I have come out of my shell and go speak to them.”

Caroline added to that by talking about her experiences. She addressed how the processes involved with being an intercollegiate athlete have helped her grow. She stated

I think there are so many experiences and factors that come together and as I am growing from being a freshman to a senior and have had a lot of positive experiences, negative experiences and always being surrounded by a team, it makes me really appreciate what I am doing and makes me want to be the best person I can be. I play a position on the court that requires me to direct the whole team so there is a lot of extra pressure. I take the heat a lot, even if it is not my fault because of my role.

Caroline also talked about how the environment helped her to become more independent.

As a person I feel like I am just a lot stronger and tougher being away from home and kind of being on my own but also being on a team. It’s made me a lot tougher as a person. I have become a better friend because with such a small team you really must take care of the people around you and always try and be there for them. It is important to give your best advice and help them when you see them struggle. And as a leader I really try to help other people be the best that they can be. I think it shaped me in that way.

Sharon feels like the environment has challenged her to be better all the way around, both as an athlete and a student. “I feel like it has challenged me in numerous aspects of life. It has

challenged me to be a better athlete and a better student because with golf you have to be so time manageable and create the time for yourself, for your friends and whatever you want to create time for.”

Lauren has felt challenged by the environment as well. “I think that it has definitely given me more confidence to be able to actually lead. Before I got here I was very shy when it comes to things. I wouldn’t want to take charge even though I felt like I could. Whereas now, I feel like I have not only the knowledge to do things but also the confidence to be able to actually influence other people.”

The environment of intercollegiate athletics can be stressful. Isabella stated that “I think one of the biggest things that has made me grow has been extra pressure. I was made captain spring of last year, and my position requires me to direct the whole team so there is a lot of extra pressure to perform and be there for my team. So, that is a lot of extra pressure and that has helped me grow a lot.”

It can be a challenge to know what to say to motivate fellow teammates and how to redirect them in moments a team needs it. Isabella naturally doesn’t feel comfortable having to speak up and has had to give thought to what is the best way to approach her teammates. “A lot of times I have to address the whole team. I don’t enjoy talking in front of a lot of people and I have to do that a lot now, so every time I must speak for a while I kind of think about what I just said and I’m like, ‘okay, maybe I shouldn’t have said that that way,’ or different situations like that.

Sometimes just the presence of the coaches and administrators made an impact on the student-athletes. Erin discussed how just them being around “helps push you further, they help

build your confidence or can make you work harder sometimes.” Jane felt the same way about the presence of administrators and coaches.

Every single time that I am just with coaches, or around coaches and administrators, I try and see what makes them successful and try to apply these qualities to my personal experience as well so that I can try to be more complete as an individual. I feel like, a sport is so much like life. You’re in community, you have your coach and teammates and you need to be able to manage them the way you manage school and social life. So, you can take every piece of information that you have in your life and relate it to sports and soccer.

Many student-athletes learn a lot about themselves and are challenged through the process of becoming a student-athletes. Presley discussed the process of being a student-athlete, stating “it helped me a lot to learn time-management. I go to school, do my homework, and attend practice. I became more organized and independent. I also had to learn to cook and clean my house because I live by myself. Lastly, being surrounded by a team helped me to know that I am not number one. I have to step back and remember I have a family that I have to take care of.” Jane talked as well about the importance of time-management.

It influenced me a lot because you’re not only an athlete, you’re a student. You need to be able to succeed in both. In school, you must be able to organize yourself and manage your time because as a student-athlete you don’t have a lot of time. So, being able to manage your time and manage what you put your energy on helps you grow and gain maturity in life. This process is much like how real life is.

Presley feels she has learned about managing self. “Having to manage the balancing of school and tennis can be challenging. Some of my teammates aren’t that disciplined and over the

course of my two years I have learned to be more disciplined and it has taught me to lead these people.” Erin talked about how athletics has helped her develop some great leadership qualities.

It has helped me to grow in my maturity, confidence, responsibility and dependability.

People always say student-athletes have good time management and they are always

reliable. We have competitive nature and so just like with leadership, I am always

someone who steps up and just tries to do the best that needs to be done. You don’t want

to take time off and you don’t need a crowd to watch you to make sure you are doing

your best because you are always working at it.

Piper talked about when her coach left for another job. That was a tough situation because of the unknowns. Her teammates asked her what they were going to do now.

I told them that I was going to just kept training hard for whatever comes next. I hope

that helped with other people, because if I was like, ‘No, I am leaving! I’m going to

another college,’ maybe five other girls would have done the same. But I hope that I

have done the right things, not always obviously, but I hope I have done what people

expect me to do with the role I was supposed to be fulfilling.

The processes of being an intercollegiate athlete require self-discipline. Sharon stated

“Golf is such a time-consuming sport because we practice like 6 hours a day, at least. You must

have the will to put extra practice time in. So, you must find the motivation in yourself because

no one else can motivate you. It can help you figure out how dedicated or how motivated you are

towards the things that are important in your life.”

Sometimes competition causes athletes to reflect so they can grow. Piper talked about

how competitions themselves cause critical reflection.

Sometimes it is just competitions, the way they are, the way you relate with other teams, in good ways and bad ways. It just makes you realize you did this wrong and next time you've just got to not do it. Or, sometimes you just go in over confident and there is a reality check. Maybe, it didn't happen the way you thought it would. You should keep learning from each situation so that you can grow from it.

Jane also talked about how last year sometimes her teammates focused on the wrong thing in the competition. It wasn't until they reflected on what their focus was on that they were able to figure out where they went wrong.

We expected a good season and it didn't go as well as we expected. I think a lot of our failure in games we lost was about mentality. Everyone was like running everywhere thinking about the next game and how we will be and how we will play that team instead of focusing on one game at a time – one sequence at a time. Sometimes we needed to make sure that everyone is focused on single things instead of being everywhere. We had a lot of failures and sometimes we were disappointed for sure, but again it's about mentality. We focused too much on what we didn't do well instead of thinking about what we did well and what we need to do to progress. I think a big part in being a leader is seeing what we did well and trying to translate it into further games and practices, letting go of things that didn't work out.

Presley talked about reflection related to competition. “When we lost, it was more of a learning process. Of course, we want to get better every day so there is so much I can learn from competitions.”

There are times that student-athletes do not play as well as they think that they should and then have to critically reflect on those situations so that they can find ways to play better and be a better contributor for the team. Sharon talked about what she had to do when that occurred.

Since spring semester was so rough because I didn't play as well as I wanted to. It was very easy to just get mad and get angry at the other girls who I knew weren't working as hard as me but were still traveling and all that stuff. So, I had to reflect on myself and be like, 'well, am I going to be a good teammate or am I just going to be playing for myself?' I had to really figure that out. All in all, I want to be the best player I can be, but I am on a team and even though golf is a very individual sport it is still a team sport in college and I need to support the people who are traveling because they shot those scores. They shot better than me, they beat me and that is just how it is. I can sit and sulk about that, or I just need to work harder and figure out how to beat them.

Managing losses can be hard, and this is something that is dealt with in intercollegiate sports.

Presley talked about how "we competed a lot and we didn't always win, and dealing with those situations and having those situations pretty often helped me to be more of a leader and help the team overcome those losses."

Sometimes, injury causes problems for student-athletes because they feel they are getting left behind while other teammates are getting better. Sharon talked about her injury and how it made her feel left out.

So, me not being out there at that competitive level made me feel like the other girls didn't want to go out and play with me because I wasn't as competitive to play with as some of the other girls on the team. It is still frustrating but it helped me figure out how I

need to go about doing things and reaching out to people, as well as making plans on my own. It taught me how to be independent real fast.

Caroline also experienced an injury after having two good years of competing well.

Coming into my junior year I had really high expectations of myself and I knew I could do well if I put the work in. Then, I started playing in the fall and the results started coming in a way I didn't want them to be and it was hard to deal with. Then, my injury happened so I had to take five steps back basically. When you are not able to play you just kind of get a whole new picture. I was just realizing the last few months how lucky I am that I can be here and compete and play. That made me also reflect on my work ethic a bit more. I would always work hard, but I think I do appreciate it a bit more after my injury and going through all of this and it makes me do even more. So, yes, I think that injury helped me grow.

Being a D1 intercollegiate puts you in many different environments, some more challenging than others. It is difficult to go through the processes and not experience growth as an individual through challenges with individual and team experiences, as well as relationships that are formed and managed. In this study, there is strong support that the processes of being a female intercollegiate athlete can contribute to their leadership identity development.

Interview Theme 3: Accountability

The intercollegiate environment forces individuals to work in the same space on a daily basis, while working towards a common goal. This creates a level of accountability to one another, a responsibility to each other. There is a reliance on one another to help create success on the court or field. It is important for these student-athletes to remember that they are a part of

the whole. The theme of accountability emerged from the data that was gathered from the research participants.

Piper discussed how her peers help provide accountability. She stated that “They’re the reason why, honestly, sometimes I get up and I go to practice because sometimes it is something hard to do and I don’t want to do it, but because there is a team behind you, you do it.” Sharon feels that they are all accountable to one another.

No one wants to be the weak link on the relay, so it most definitely causes you to push yourself. Sometimes with track, you’re out there by yourself. To make it a team sport, you’ve got to make yourself encourage your teammate who’s lining up with you during that race. Clearly you want her to do well but you want to do better than her too. I mean, it teaches you how to encourage others but also be on your game too.

Riley agreed about everyone being accountable to one another. “It has really made me step up knowing that I have other people that are watching me, that are counting on me and so I have really grown.” She also added that “it effects my daily life too just knowing that I have these girls counting on me, so I always have to work hard with school. I can’t slack off because I know if don’t make certain grades, or whatever, I wouldn’t be able to be eligible and I will let my team down. It has basically just shaped a lot of my life.”

Kendall talked about how her coach shows them that they are all pieces of the whole and must rely on one another for success. “Coach Beth has helped us tremendously in getting each other to see how we all connect in different ways but as a whole we work pretty well together. Having each other, being all different but having our similarities helps in getting each other to back each other up. It enables us to move forward and keep accelerating in rankings and moving up as a team.” Erin felt the same regarding the realization of the importance of each teammate,

and how important each person is to the whole in accomplishing goals. “You need all six. Well, you need more than the six people on the court. You need the energy from everyone on the bench and you need everyone working together to make it work. So, that one person missing, it doesn’t feel like the unity is there. You need every piece of the puzzle.”

Lauren talked about how much it means to be a part of competing in intercollegiate athletics, and how she has a chance to compete for so much more than just herself.

It means the world to me, to come here and compete. When I was little, it was something that I would watching on tv. I played basketball at the time and always wanted to go to the NCAAs, as I thought it would be so cool. But, I never thought that I could achieve it. So then once I got into track and started progressing better it showed me that I could do things. That helped me set my goals higher and accomplish more, and now I am getting this experience I am having here, which was amazing. The fact that I could do it kind of means a lot to me, and now I am competing for not only myself, but also my team and my country because of what I am a part of here.

The environment also creates accountability to each other. Jane recalled a time that she allowed a person on her team to get away with being lazy and then later reflected on the fact that she should have stood up for what was right for the team.

I remember during fitness seeing a girl being a little lazy and it was like kind of on our own, like sprinting work. I saw her not pushing herself and I knew that she could do better. I didn’t say a thing but coach saw her and we had to do more fitness because of that. I told myself this is one time that I needed to step up be a leader for the team as it was my responsibility to the team. I saw her and I think that at that time it was my responsibility to go up to her and tell her to pick it up because otherwise the entire team

pays. Keeping teammates accountable a big thing. You need to make sure that you're doing the right thing, but it is also your responsibility to make sure that everyone is on the same page and that we are all working at the same intensity or with the same mentality because it is how a team is going to progress.

It is very important in this environment for the student-athletes to understand what roles they fill on these teams so that they know how to be productive for their team and the best they can be. Erin discussed the role that she has played on her team and how she has grown each year by reflecting on where she is each year. She came in as a walk-on and earned scholarship after her first year. She has changed roles on the team each year, so she has had to think about what the coach needs and work to prepare the best she can to be great in that position. She is constantly reflecting, adjusting, and working.

Working amongst a group of people is different than just working alone. It raises the level of responsibility to be working on self, always considering others in the decisions they make, and understanding roles within the group. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) stated that leadership is a “relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good” (p. 21). Yukl (1998) defined leadership as influence processes affecting the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish the objectives, the motivation of follower to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. In the intercollegiate athletic environment, it is evident that there are cooperative relationships and teamwork, as well as the motivation to achieve the objectives.

Needing each person takes ownership in the process, and creating the space for it, allows for growth within each individual.

Interview Theme 4: Providing Direction

In the context of intercollegiate athletes, there is quite a bit of direction or guidance given. Sometimes, it is represented through role models, both adults and peers. Sometimes, there is direction given about performance or managing relationships. There is also guidance provided to athletes about the future, after athletics. As this theme emerged, the researcher found evidence of a few different types of direction given to the student-athletes.

There are times that student-athletes must reflect on themselves so that they can determine if they are on the right path, if they are growing, or if they are getting in their own way. Piper talked about how she has learned more about herself by watching one of her teammates. “There is a girl on the team, who is a walk-on but she’s the hardest worker on the team. I can achieve better running times and I put half the hard work she puts in. So, she is the person that makes me realize you’ve got to hard work, you need to bring everything you’ve got every day and you could do so much better.”

Lauren talked about how others are good role models.

Seeing the way they they’re involved in so many things. For example, the president of SAAC is doing research and he is a great athlete and he always shows up. Everyone on our team that I am really close to really works their butt off to do their best. Just seeing the amount of dedication and hard work that they put into not only athletics but everything else has really influenced my leadership and just my growth in general.

Jane stated that she sees athletic department adults as role models. As she previously stated,

Every single time that I am just with coaches, around coaches and administrators I try and see what makes them successful and try to apply these qualities to my personal experience as well so that I can try to be more complete as an individual. I feel like a sport is so much like life. You're in community, you have your coach and teammates and you need to be able to manage them the way you manage school and social life. So, you can take every piece of information that you have in your life and relate it to sports and soccer.

Erin discussed how her coaches have encouraged her and built her confidence through spending time one on one giving direction and advice.

My coach talks about leadership and we will read books related to the topic, like this past spring we read *The Hard Hat*. Then, the other day we had individual meetings and we talked about trying to be a vocal leader and how to go about it. We read *The Energy Bus* also. Those are two good books as a team to read. In addition, they're good at pushing you and just know what to tell you and what to push you in. They're good at knowing the best direction for you and wanting the best for you and figuring out how to push you. They also try to help with your confidence.

Lauren feels like she has experienced leadership development from collaborating with her coaches, finding the way to produce the best product. It helped build confidence and challenged her to think about ways she would handle situations and find solutions.

Just the fact that I can communicate with my coach, he listens and we can work together to produce something, helped to impact my leadership growth. It showed me that often dictatorship and things like that don't work out, but when you can try and express the way you are feeling people try and listen. This is something that I never thought before I

got here. I just thought you just sat down and did what you're told, whether you were on the track or even the classroom and things like that. Whereas, now I feel like it is almost more positive and I can express how I am feeling and try and work with that. He has been a positive influence that way.

Riley stated that "my coach has really boosted my confidence in that I had never really considered myself a leader and then when she said I was capable and provided the direction I needed, I guess she really thought that I can do that, like I can be that person for these girls."

Sharon discussed how she has been provided direction, which has in turn built confidence in who she is as a golfer and what she can accomplish. They see things from a different perspective than us as athletes and can give us just what we need. "He has helped me grow tremendously and now I am so much of a better golfer now that I have been working with him for three months. I didn't think I would be able to reach that, which is awesome. He has showed me things with golf that I didn't know about, just little things here and there and when you get stuck in a situation and how to have fun with it." She also feels that her coach has mentored her not only has a player, but also in life beyond the athlete.

He's helped me with realizing that there are so many more aspects to being who I want to be than just golf. You're more than your sport. You are not your sport and your sport does not define you. You play your sport and that is what you do but that is not who you are. And he's helped with that, knowing that there are other things out there besides golf. Even though that's what is important right now, you still need to look at other avenues and create new avenues with your sport and get in with those. For example, we do a lot of community service at the Target House. Those kids love having us as athletes there and

he has taught me that you can take your sport and do so much more with it than just playing your sport.

Many athletes are influenced by the feedback the coaches give them daily. Piper has been influenced by the feedback she has gotten from her coaches, “not right after a competition, but they will eventually give me feedback. They always show me something new that I didn’t learn or I didn’t realize about it.”

Presley feels that she has had support from the academic support staff when she most needed it, and now she feels more confident in her schoolwork. “When I first came here to the states, I was pretty lost in school and I had individuals who saw my potential and they kept me going and were so encouraging. Over time, I began to do better in school. They were very helpful.”

Kendall has received guidance, direction and encouragement from her life skills coordinator.

She has helped me grow as a leader. I came to her probably around her second week on the job and I was like, ‘Hey I need to find an internship for this summer.’ And I was like, ‘I have my resume, do you mind helping me with that?’ She helped me tremendously with that. By going to her and working on it, I could contact people that weren’t necessarily looking for an intern, but now I have connections for next summer. By getting closer with her she has helped me move forward in my leadership skills and I’ll be Vice President of our huge spring athletic department event next year. She has definitely helped me become better at leading and taking initiative.

Academic support staff is another area where adults are very influential in the development of our student-athletes. They challenge them to think about the future, who they

want to become, as well as the path that it will take to get there. Piper talked about the academic support she has been provided.

Academically they have been helpful. And then also my biology major advisor, she has been a great friend in the sense of a 40-year-old friend. I actually went for a talk with her two weeks ago, and she's like, 'Well, what are we doing now? What are we doing in a year?' She is like a mentor. And then she asked me, 'Well, pertaining to a future in running, where do you want to go? How far do you want to go? What about your schooling? Do you want to do both? Can you do both? You've got to talk with some professional athletes and see if that's what you want, or not. See about it so you can make that decision of saying 'Okay, now I want to go pro, or no, now I don't want to go pro and I want to get a PhD.'

It appears, based on the evidence, that student-athletes are surrounded daily by individuals and situations that help them get the guidance and direction they need for growth as an athlete, an individual, and as a leader.

Interview Theme 5: Encourage Problem-Solving

This theme emerged from the data provided from the research participants as they reflected on their group processes, their competitions, and their relationships. The intercollegiate athletics environment requires them to deal with issues and limitations head-on. To make progress and to grow individually and as a team, there is constant reflection and problem-solving.

Presley discussed how she has been guided by her coaches and able to collaborate with them.

I have a new one from last year, but both have always been so supportive and they're always treating me like an equal, even though I know we are not. They're always saying, 'This is the problem, so how are we going to solve it?' They're always telling me key things, like, 'That was a milestone or that was a key point.' That makes me go in one direction and not another. So, they've been really guiding me through these last years. Isabella discussed how she hasn't always felt comfortable leading, but because her coach shows he believes in her abilities to do it, she has grown. "When someone does something wrong, coach has me go and talk to them to find solutions. So, it is because of them I have come out of my shell and will go speak to them."

Student-athletes are constantly navigating relationships while on a team. They are individuals with different personalities, backgrounds and beliefs. Sometimes they must manage team conflict and should work on being a good teammate. Piper discusses her relationships with her teammates and how it has caused her to reflect on how to manage them.

Some of them are great, while with some I don't have a good relationship. Even those situations have made me realize how I behave toward them and how I am wrong when I behave badly towards them. I realize that I need to grow and that there are certain things that you just don't say or don't do. I guess, sometimes I am impulsive, so sometimes I do something and then I realize I did it wrong so I have to retract my words, which is something hard that I am learning how to do. So just dealing with people is something hard for me and I've learned a lot about that and am still learning a lot about it. She has found that she must put herself in someone else's shoes before she reacts to her teammates. Presley feels she has had to reflect on how to communicate better with her teammates. "Since I am from Germany I am pretty direct and straight up and my teammates

aren't. If I said anything, something that would hurt them they told me, 'You can't say that,' or, 'Don't act like that.' So, I learned from that and got calmer and not so direct because I have a better understanding of what hurts people or what helps people now."

Kendall discussed how she has managed differences between teammates.

I would say that intercollegiate athletics has influenced my growth in leadership by putting me in different situations that allow me to have a more open mind about how others think. I have to think about how I could help this person if I needed help or how they could help me if I needed it. It has also challenged me to figure out different ways to support each other as a team. Even our coaches must do the exact same for us.

Sharon talked about how having conflict among her team makes her think about how to communicate better in certain situations and in the future.

It was frustrating because we all want the same thing, but we aren't doing it in the same way and we aren't going about it in the right way. We don't know how to communicate to each other and we don't like to put ourselves outside of the situation and look at it at an unbiased viewpoint because our selfishness kind of just comes in. So, it has helped me deal with situations like that and try to level with people even if I don't understand the situation or if I don't really agree with the viewpoint or situation.

Isabella also talked about resolving conflict, stating that "there has been conflict and you have to overcome that and learn to deal with people, in the dorms and in different situations." Sharon talked about how you must deal with conflict head on in this environment. "Stress exists. I know our team is really small compared to a lot of other teams, but given it is so small you must deal with the conflict head on. You can't just go to another person on the team or another group

on the team and kind of be like, ‘Okay I’m just not going to deal with this for a few days and it’ll go away or resolve itself.’ It never goes away.”

Competition challenged the participants to problem solve as well. Kendall discussed how important it is to reflect over how her and her teammates competed, the decisions they made, and how they can do better. “It is important to think about if we had done this instead of that, maybe it wouldn’t have affected our game in a negative way. Maybe it would have helped us more in a positive manner.”

There are some situations in the intercollegiate environment that are tough. Lauren experienced that when she didn’t feel that her training was helping her get better. She had to evaluate herself, what makes her perform her best, how to communicate that with her coach, and how to get better through the situation.

My freshman year, I threw terribly the whole year so that was mentally tough on me. I didn’t know if it was just the environment or if it was the coaching or just the change in myself. So, I think just really having to reflect on that and finding ways to make it better has helped. I have improved 7 meters which is extremely substantial. So, just being able to see the negatives that I had experienced and just pushing through it instead of just being like, I should just go back home or whatever. I thought whether I was forgetting something that I needed to be doing. I could then talk to my coach more and we incorporated more things that I think I needed into my workouts. I became happier doing them and I felt like I was being more productive. So, we kind of got to a happy medium where I do everything he wants but we also try and incorporate new things and just try things that I am used to as well. That really helped me and our relationship has really been positive and helped me get over the adversity that I had freshman year.

There are many situations, both positive and negative, that student-athletes experience in their intercollegiate career that challenge them. They made a choice to be a part of an organization that is going to require growth, reflection, interactions, and performance. The environment presents an opportunity to be impactful to this organization and the people involved in it. If they can embrace the support and encouragement given, the challenging and competitive environment, the accountability, receiving direction and become an effective problem-solver, these student-athletes have a chance to grow and develop their leadership identity.

Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation was the third form of data collection the researcher used to determine if Komives et al.'s (2005) LID model, and more specifically the developmental influences, were present in the environment of intercollegiate athletics and to what degree. Harper (2002) stated that images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words since part of the brain that processes visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. It also can help the researcher overcome the difficulties posed by in-depth interviewing because it is anchored in an image that is understood, at least in part, by both parties (Harper, 2002). Each of the two focus groups were presented seven different images and asked to share any thoughts that came to mind. They were told that if they did not have any specific thoughts or feelings to share about an image, they did not have to speak up. See Table 6 for image descriptions, as well as Appendix C to see the actual images presented during the focus group sessions.

Table 6

Photo Images and Descriptions Presented During Focus Groups

Image Number	Image Description
Image 1	A basketball player surrounded by many defenders on the court
Image 2	Coaches and players clapping and smiling from the sidelines of the court
Image 3	Two guys assisting a young boy who is riding a bike
Image 4	Team in a huddle, with teammates linking arms, and a coach speaking to players in front of her
Image 5	A player running with a huge smile on her face and her arms out to her side
Image 6	A coach with her hand on the shoulder of a player, walking with her
Image 7	A softball pitcher standing on the pitcher's mound, looking toward the dugout or someone with a facial expression that does not appear happy

Image 1. In Image 1, there is a female basketball player on the court who is surrounded by four defenders from the opposing team. She is throwing a basketball toward someone. Jane commented on how “she seems to really be on her own, with none of her teammates around. To me it tells me that there is only so much she can do on her own.” Sharon had similar thoughts.

I know related to sports your emotions produce certain facial expressions. So, it kind of looks like she is worried or fearful or she doesn't know if this is right, kind of thing. Like she doesn't know what to do, especially if you're working on your own. You have so many people around you on a different team, so you won't be confident in what you're doing and shot making or whatever you're trying to do athletic wise because you're being guarded and you're circled by people you don't know, are not familiar with and aren't your teammates. So, you're not going to be 100% on I don't know, anything, especially in a basketball sense.

Riley mentioned that “risk came to her mind. She is the only one in the middle. Either she is getting somewhere with her teammates or to the basket.”

Caroline and Kendall felt that this situation could be positive. Caroline stated that “being surrounded by the opponent or different team could also present a challenge to her. I mean she could fail at it, but she could also be able to own it and do well because she is thrown into this tough situation. She may do really well.” Kendall mentioned that she “thinks that’s a good sign when it comes to basketball. I don’t really know basketball much but there are all these blue players in one area so it means that all of her teammates are getting in position to be open or available for her.” Intercollegiate athletics can create an environment that is one that has many challenges and stressors. This image creates a great example of what Komives (2005) describes as meaningful involvement, where students can learn more about self and developing new skills. This is a part of the leadership identity development process.

Image 2. In Image 2, coaches and players are on the sideline of the basketball court and they are smiling and clapping for who is on the court. Presley said that it made her think of support and joy. “You know that something good is happening because of this and I just like the way that they are all standing up from the bench, because it just shows a lot of respect and dedication to the team. There is pure joy in the fact that their teammates are doing something positive.” Riley added that she “was going to say support too. They just look like they’re fully trusting and excited about what is happening. They’re willing to stand for their teammates.” Sharon liked seeing smiles on their faces. “It isn’t mean, like yelling or clapping that sometimes you see when people getting on to other people. It is motivating and very uplifting and encouraging.”

Erin said it made of her think of a team. “They are cheering and they all look happy. No one is sulking that they are sitting on the bench, they are all cheering on everyone and teammates that are on the court. So, it seems like it is a unified team and that it is in everyone’s best interest.” Caroline agreed with Erin thinking that those sitting the bench could be unhappy, but “they are all up and no matter if they’re playing or not they can still cheer for their team.” Riley felt the image portrayed support. “They just look fully trusting and excited about what is happening. They’re willing to stand for their teammates.”

Ryan (1989) found that over the course of an athlete’s college career, there is growth in their leadership skills. He argued that athletics contributes to development of interpersonal skills through various learning experiences such as cooperative group tasks and involvement with peers. Intercollegiate athletics provides an environment where individuals are working together, supporting one another, and having to consider and support others. This image provides a good example of that.

Piper saw something different in looking at the image. “I know this isn’t about leadership, but if you look in the background there isn’t that many people. And I feel like if it was the men’s basketball it would be all full and I hate it, I hate it so much.” She was very frustrated by that, knowing how much effort is put into what they do every day.

Image 3. In Image 3, there are two guys helping a younger boy ride a bike. Jane related the photo to athletic experiences. “It makes me think almost how that little boy could be a freshman and how the two older people are upperclassman and how you need to be able to take them under your wing and make sure they are buying into the program, understanding what the team is about, making sure they are on the right path and they are going towards the same goal as we are.” Sharon related this photo to leadership.

I feel like the two people on the outside are a support system in a way. He wouldn't be able to ride a bike, you can say that metaphorically, in a sense, if he didn't have somebody to teach him. So, in terms of leadership, you're never going to have leaders emerge if you don't have a structural background to see what leaders are like or to have people support them in the realm of their, I don't know, their walk to leadership. So, you need to have people that will back you up and you must have people who are there for you. If you don't, then how is anyone ever going to learn how to ride a bike unless you just do it on your own.

Riley felt the image was all about trust. Lauren stated that it represented "joy and opportunity, because they are helping that person do something that probably not everyone can do."

Isabella and Kendall thought the image depicted the presence of those who help us grow. Isabella said, "this makes me think of teachers and just people who will help you in things." Kendall said "I think of motivation and having someone who will push you to become better. Just like learning how to ride a bike, you have to get to each step of everything by being pushed a little out of your comfort zone."

Weese & Nicholls (1986) stated that in the environment of postsecondary intercollegiate athletics, leadership development is always a focus because in any specific game or competition, an athlete emerges as a leader and is able to motivate and organize teammates to play as a unified group. There are so many examples of opportunities where different student-athletes have an opportunity to grow as leaders, and this image evoked that feeling from the research participants.

Image 4. In Image 4, a team is in a huddle, with teammates linking arms and the coach speaking to players in front of her. Sharon discussed how the image made her think of how a coach leads and then must give control to the players.

What I see is somebody crouching down in the middle and everyone is looking at that one person, who I am assuming is the coach. The coach is probably giving roles or action play or whatever they're expecting of you that day, but everybody has their arm around each other. So, in the back they are unified, like we are together and in this together, listening together. I don't know, in a sense the coach is like the leader, but after she lets them go, she can't do anything about it anymore. So, she has the control right now but after that, once the game starts, the coach no longer has control and is not a leader anymore. So, you must rely on your players to become the leaders and give them the chance to step up and do it like you know that they can do.

Erin's thoughts about the image represented unity, as well as divide.

It is like, everyone is kind of together in a way. I can tell they are all together because they're all attentive and they're linked with arms around each other and looking. But then I also kind of see a divide with it. You have the players that are playing on the court, the starters sitting on the bench and then the coaches facing them. And the ones on the bench not playing are also behind the coach. So, while there is a sense of unity there is also a divide because you're separating the people that are on the court and on the bench. Not only that, but when you are behind the coach you can't ever hear what is being said so you must put yourself around to hear what she is saying.

Lauren, Presley, and Isabella felt the image portrayed unity and family. Lauren stated that "it makes me think of family. Just the way that everyone is standing, supporting and listening to those and the way that the coach is speaking makes me think of respect in every aspect of family. They're just there supporting." Presley felt the image represented unity. It made Isabella "think of family and team too, just the way that everyone is standing up and like all holding each other."

Yukl (1998) and Northouse's (2007) definitions of leadership identify a few consistent components of the phenomenon of leadership. Some of these central components are: (a) leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influencing others, (c) leadership happens within the context of a group, (d) leadership involves goal attainment, and (e) these goals are shared by leaders and their followers (Rowe, 2013, p. 1). In the intercollegiate athletic environment, and more specifically in this image, there are many opportunities for leadership growth by not only being the one in the center of the huddle, but by being a part of the process and working together with others supporting one another and planning together.

Riley's thoughts were more subjective and had different thoughts. She felt the image represented "Focus and trying to listen to basically what the game plan is. I am kind of biased because ... I just know you know from being in that situation, you're all trying to hear the game plan just in case you're thrown into it and just to make sure you know what is going on."

Image 5. In Image 5, a player is running on a soccer field with a huge smile on her face and her arms out to her side. To Erin, the image is about how the hard work has paid off. "Like, she is celebrating a goal, or something good happened. She could be, you know, celebrating a goal or celebrating a teammate but it just seems like everything is paid off." Presley, Riley, Kendall, and Lauren had similar thoughts. Presley and Riley said it made them think of joy. Kendall said excitement and energy is what it made her think of. Lauren stated that it made her think of a "a feeling like no other. You've accomplished something."

Caroline, Jane, and Isabella all knew the person in the photo, so they could share more about what was going on in the photo. Caroline shared that "she is looking towards her team and something like running towards her team and I think that is pretty cool too. Like, maybe she

scored the goal but it wouldn't have happened without the team.” Jane has known this person in the photo for a long time and how humble she is.

I have known her for a long time and although she is known to score a lot of goals, she never takes the whole credit for that. She always comes to her teammates and although she gets the point and the recognition she knows that she couldn't have done it without her team. Every time she scores, she turns around right away, and there is no celebrating on her own. She always is with the team.

Isabella said this person is her best friend. She recalled this situation and it was all about celebrating one of her best goals. It was a great moment of accomplishment.

Sharon does not know this person but feels it could relate to anyone in that situation. “If it is the same photo but with a different person, say maybe they're reacting like this to another teammate making a goal or doing something good in the sense of, we all know how hard it is. We all know how hard it is, especially in scoring a goal in soccer.”

Komives et al. (2005) discussed how team-based involvement can teach students to do their best while supporting others at the same time. This attributes to meaningful involvement, which can influence leadership identity development. This image evoked many thoughts and feelings, but most were about accomplishment and the fact that others are a part of that success. The athlete also looked extremely confident in this moment. Astin (1993) found that growth in self-esteem, autonomy, and communication skills were a result of increased personal development derived from organizational involvement.

Image 6. Image 6 shows a coach with her hand on the shoulder of a player, walking with her. Many thought the image portrayed comfort, support, guidance, and meaningful relationships. Presley stated the image made her think of comfort. Piper talked about the image

portraying comfort as well. “Like, she’s trying to reach out but something didn’t go right. I don’t know if that is what happened but it is what it made me think of. Like, maybe something didn’t go well and there is always a teammate there to help you out or lift you up.”

Isabella shared about how “it makes me think of guidance. It kind of looks like the player has her head down, like maybe something went wrong and the coach is there to guide her and help her through it.” Lauren felt it portrayed support “because the way that she is there for her, whether she is happy or sad or just focused her coach. The coach is there trying to lead her and give directions.”

Caroline focused in on the player and coach relationship. “Even though you are on the team you still want to try and have a good relationship with your coach.” Riley thought there was a caring relationship there. “The way that she has her hand on her shoulder they are obviously comfortable enough to do that. It looks like she is there empathizing with her or giving her advice because she really cares about the outcome and how she is feeling.”

Sharon and Kendall spoke from their experience of knowing the people in the image. Sharon talked about how coaches are there for the players in different ways.

I know these two people, so I can just speak about this, personality wise. She is just awesome. But, she is not super embrative and I don’t see a facial expression on her face, so I just see her wanting the athlete to know she is there, in a sense. Like, ‘I am not going to tell you what to do because I know you are being hard on yourself but just wanting you to know that I am here.’ So, that is one of the most important things for coaching. We all need coaching because everybody is capable of being better and able to grow, but in the sense of being a player who is massively hard on themselves no matter what, a lot of the times she just needs someone who is there. She doesn’t always need someone telling her

what to do, telling her what she is doing is wrong or right. She just needs someone who is there.

Kendall also spoke about the image with the coach's personality in mind. "Just knowing coach, she probably cracked a joke there to put a smile on her face and just get her in a different mindset. Golf is very mental so just going from a down moment and bringing someone up to a different mind is important."

Poczwardowski, Bardot, and Menschen (2002) mentioned that coaches have a great impact on an athlete's training process, performance outcomes, and specific aspects of their personal lives. Rowe (2013) added that leadership is about guiding a group of people toward reaching an endpoint or accomplishing a goal. To the research participants, this image portrays the guidance provided by a coach and the support needed in this environment.

Image 7. In Image 7, there is a softball pitcher standing on the pitcher's mound, looking toward the dugout or someone with a facial expression that does not appear happy. Isabella thought she looked focused and tough, almost scary. Most of the participants did not feel that much positivity came from what this image portrays. Lauren stated that she "kind of looks confused to me or like she is giving someone the stank eye. Kind of like, what the heck is going on with you." Kendall felt "She looks defeated, like someone just hit a home run and she's looking at someone in the other dugout like can you guys just shut up so I can go back to pitching."

Jane felt this image didn't inspire good leadership. "It looks like she is disappointed or something didn't go as well as it was supposed to. I might be wrong but sometimes this is the look a teammate will give you when you make a mistake or they feel like you have let them down in a way. I don't think it inspires good leadership at all, just in the expression."

Caroline related this image to how an opponent's negative energy can give you an advantage over them.

If I were to relate this picture to tennis, you play it one to one against your opponent and the match isn't over until the last point and everything you do until then it gives a certain vibe to your opponent. You are super hard on yourself and if you show that negative emotion during the match or game, then your opponent will notice somehow. Even if you don't say anything or scream, your opponent will notice. It can make them stronger too.

Sharon discussed how that look would not motivate anyone, especially if it was directed at a teammate. She also discussed, just like Caroline, how it translates to giving opponents an advantage.

Relating to golf, if you're in a tournament where we are qualifying, which qualifying is one of the hardest things to do because you're playing with people that you love, you're competing against them. But in a tournament, say this girl in front of me on the next tee, and say we are all on the same team and all the scores are counting. If she looks back and I am on the green and she is on the text tee and I am like 'crap she is not playing well so I need to play better,' it puts pressure on me. Then, I am not playing my game anymore. I am not thinking about just me playing shot by shot. I am playing ahead and that is the worst thing you can ever do in golf. It is a mental game, so if you have mental expressions like this and they're not upbeat or positive, then you're not going to feel positivity. You're going to feel the exact negativity that are on people's faces.

Caroline agreed that sometimes people don't realize they have a certain look and that they come across in a certain way. "I just know people tell me how mean I look sometimes, and I am like

‘I’m actually happy right now, you just don’t realize.’ So, sometimes you probably have to be more aware of how you are mentally and how it shows and comes across to other people.”

Davoren and Hwang (2014) discussed how being involved in intercollegiate athletics brings unique stressors that most of the general population does not have to deal with. Based on the responses from the research participants, it appears that those unique stressors are getting the best of this student-athlete. Dupuis et al. (2004) stated that athletes who practice leadership have been shown to ensure high standards and high work ethic, to help the team handle adversity, to help develop better team chemistry, to help minimize and manage team conflict, to help the coach better understand the team’s needs, and to help recruit players. If this image portrays anything, it portrays that the process of growth is challenging and has its setbacks. Many times, however, it is moments such as this that helps student-athletes learn and grow for the future.

The use of photo elicitation was intended to add to the data the researcher needed in order to answer the research questions in this study. There was evidence that the photos evoked responses that brought up similar topics which had been discussed in the individual semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews. The research participants brought up adult influence, both in the guidance and support they give. They discussed how their peers influence the way they respond in competitive situations, as well as the support and meaningful relationships they provide. They discussed reflective learning in moments they struggle in competitions and in their own confidence, as well as moments they can help their teams. Meaningful involvement was discussed throughout the discussion of the photos, as they spoke about connections with teammates and coaches, as well as trust. The researcher believed that even though some of the participants knew people in some of the images, it did not create bias. It actually provided insight about the type of people those individuals are.

Summary

The data that was gathered in this research study emerged into five major themes. They are: Support, Accountability, Providing Direction, Encourages Problem-Solving, and Challenging and Competitive Environment. The researcher found a strong presence of peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning within the themes. Evaluating how intercollegiate athletes are influenced by these factors in the intercollegiate athletics environment gave new insight to the developmental influences in the Leadership Identity Model. It was not always comfortable experiences or positive interactions that encouraged development within the student-athletes. Many times, it was the conflicts with others, the losses, and the injuries that challenged growth in them. In addition to the developmental influences, the processes of being an intercollegiate athlete also aided in the leadership identity development within the female student-athletes.

In the final chapter, the researcher will discuss the degree to which the data supported the three research questions. The conclusions and implications for future research, based on the findings of this research study, will also be addressed. This study was able to provide very useful information regarding the application of Komives et al.'s (2005) Leadership Identity Development Model, and more specifically the presence and impact of the developmental influences on female intercollegiate student athletes. This was the first study completed where the application of the LID was focused on the co-curricular activity of intercollegiate athletics. Therefore, I call for areas of further research and indicate implications for practice in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Discussions, Conclusions, and Implications

Becoming a leader is not as simple as being given that role. It is a part of one's identity that develops over time, through experiences and reflections, as well as through interactions with multiple influences, and is not guaranteed. As previously noted, the LID model's developmental influences were extremely critical to changing how one thought of self and others moving into the more complex identity stages (Komives et al., 2006). In this study, the researcher got the opportunity to learn more about the processes female intercollegiate athletes go through which can contribute to their leadership identity development. The researcher was also able to learn about the peer and adult influences they can be impacted by, whether they find meaning in being involved in intercollegiate athletics, and whether the reflective learning involved can contribute to the leadership identity development. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the findings related to the original research questions and the theoretical framework that the research was supported by. The key findings of this research are:

4. The relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athletes.
5. The four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning) affect the leadership identity development of the female intercollegiate athletes.
6. There are specific processes involved with being an intercollegiate athlete that contribute to the development of the leadership identity within the female student-athletes.

The following is a brief discussion of the findings, as well as how they connect to the theoretical framework that the research is built on. The researcher will also offer implications for further

study, address whether the research tools were effective, and how the data can be utilized by athletic departments to enhance the experiences of student-athletes and support growth in their leadership identities.

Research Question 1

Being involved in intercollegiate athletics puts student-athletes in an environment where they are constantly interacting with individuals and building relationships. Some of these relationships are with teammates and other peers, and others are with adults. The first research question deals with how these relationships may impact leadership identity development within the female intercollegiate athletics. *How do the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athletes?*

Komives et al. (2005) described how engaging with peers, whether they are older or the same age, gains depth and meaning as the leadership identity develops. Older peers serve as role models, getting younger peers involved in organizations and modeling leader behavior. Peers are a source of affirmation and support, and can serve as teammates, followers, collaborators, and mean-makers. In the data gathered by the researcher, there is strong evidence that peers provided support for each other, they challenged each other, and pushed each other to become better for both themselves and for their teams. They provided accountability as well. Each participant spoke about the influence of leadership growth influenced by their peers. It wasn't always just the positive experiences either. Many times, the challenging ones with their teammates caused the most growth.

Working amongst other peers caused them to learn how to manage conflict in some of their relationships, challenged them to work on their communication and grow from these

situations. Caroline mentioned specifically how some of the struggles with players eventually turned into something positive because everyone learned from it. She feels that being together daily and experiencing conflicts helps them grow.

Kendall discussed how her fellow teammates have been there for moments when she has needed them, and she has been there to motivate them, problem-solve, and encourage. Erin felt that the experience of having the peer relationships has changed who she is as a person from having to manage others. In Image 2 from the photo elicitation, it portrays coaches and teammates cheering on excitedly for someone on the court. Most of the feedback stated that it makes them think about the encouragement and support they feel from teammates. That fuels confidence in self. Komives' (2005) grounded theory study resulted in five categories that interacted to create a leadership identity. One of those categories is named Developing Self. In this category, students experience a deepening self-awareness and gain self-confidence. It appears based on the participant feedback about the athletic environment, peer influence supports leadership identity growth in this way.

It was evident that the participants felt it was great to be around other peers who experience similar situations and can relate to their own experiences. Caroline mentioned how having others to relate to helps her persevere, because she knows that there are people by her side who understand all that they go through. She can't imagine going through this experience without her teammates.

The team environment allows the student-athletes to learn from one another, whether it is related to the development of their skill or how to better relate to one another. Sometimes the athletes are influenced simply by how another athlete has modeled leadership behavior. Lauren brought up how she admires the Student Athlete Advisory Board president, seeing how he is

always present at different sports competitions showing support, all while being a great student who is involved in research on the side. Plus, he works extremely hard on his sport, putting in so much work.

Study participants described the close relationships they formed with their teammates due to participation in intercollegiate athletics and how, based on their own experiences, they have contributed to their leadership development. These relationships with their peers challenged them to get better both at their skill and at their commitment levels. They aided in growth in confidence due to showing support and being encouraging to one another. These relationships helped them become better communicators and manage conflict amongst each other. Many of them have now gone on to take the things they have learned from those relationships and help other peers they encounter, making an impact in their lives. The situations they encountered weren't all easy to navigate, and sometimes they weren't close to everyone they were around, but even those challenging moments pushed them to work on self and get through these moments for the betterment of the whole team.

There was also strong evidence that adults influence leadership identity growth in the student-athletes. Komives et al. (2005) stated that adults play different roles in influencing student movement throughout the leadership identity development stages. Adults can be important in confidence building and showing support for students. They can create safe spaces for students, and can be role models. Komives et al. (2005) goes on to say that adults are usually first to recognize a student's leadership potential, and they become mentors to students. They eventually become mean-makers, and make a difference in each stage of the development of student's leadership identity.

In this research study, there is strong evidence of adult influences in the student-athlete's leadership identity development, as each of the participants had something to say about how adults have influenced their leadership growth. Adults were supportive, provided direction, encouraged problem solving and independence, built confidence, challenged the athletes, set examples for them, and helped them begin to plan for the future. They are around the athletes every day, whether it is in meetings or on the court or field. The adult influences included coaches, athletic trainers, administrators, academic advisors, and life skills coordinators.

Coaches are an integral part of the intercollegiate athlete's career. Poczwardowski, Barrott, and Henschen (2002) stated that coaches have a great impact on an athlete's training process, performance outcomes, and specific aspects of their personal lives. Presley talked about how her coaches have shown trust in her, asked her for advice, and saw her as a leader before she ever did. Image 6 from the photo elicitation portrayed a coach walking with a player and she had her hand on the player's shoulder. From this image, Isabella felt it demonstrated the guidance coaches can give, as well as the support they provide. Lauren has been able to collaborate with her coach, which has empowered her to find solutions to situations. It has helped build her confidence.

Many participants discussed how adults other than just coaches impacted their leadership growth. Image 3 from the photo elicitation was described as having two guys helping a young boy to ride a bike. Isabella said it reminded her of teachers and other people who will help you in things. Jane said every time she was around administrators she tries to see what makes them successful and then tries to apply those qualities to her personal experiences so that she can become more complete as a person. Piper discussed how her academic advisor challenged her to

think about what path she will take after college, encouraging her to think about her goals and desires for her future.

In this study, the participants were quick to not only speak about the impact the coaches have had on their leadership growth, but also the other adults they encounter while participating in intercollegiate athletics. Only a few participants talked about how the coaches improved their game. They talked more about how coaches have encouraged them to be leaders, be confident in who they are, and challenged them to problem solve. The academic support staff and life skills coordinators challenged them to think about their future and who they are beyond the athlete. Many times, it was clear that the adult helped the student-athlete see their potential as leaders and impactful individuals, through encouragement and support.

Through the one-on-one interview and focus group process, the researcher gained a clear picture of how the relationships formed through the participation in intercollegiate athlete have aided in the development of leadership identities of the athletes. Martinson and O'Brien (2010) described how explanatory case studies would create the flexibility needed to get the comprehensive data needed to gain a clear insight, and this format supported this idea.

Research Question 2

In Komives et al.'s (2005) original grounded theory study on developing a leadership identity, the experiences and reflections those participants shared revealed the way a leader identity is developed. This study resulted in five categories that interacted to create a leader identity. One of those categories is developmental influences. The influences include: peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. These are essential influences in fostering development of a leader identity. In this study, the researcher sought to determine the degree to which these developmental influences influenced the leadership identity

development in the lives of female intercollegiate athletes, and the significance is sought by answering research question two. *How do the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development?* The significance of peer influence and adult influence was addressed in research question one. There is strong evidence that peer and adult influence did influence leadership identity growth in the female intercollegiate athletes.

Meaningful involvement is one of the developmental influences that is important to the process of leader identity development. The participants must make meaning with the experiences they are having to help them grow. Komives et al. (2005) discussed how the involvement helps them learn about themselves, develop new skills, and experience diversity amongst peers. Komives et al. (2005) goes on to say that team involvement can teach students to do their best while supporting others at the same time.

Intercollegiate athletics provides an environment where student-athletes are a part of team for extended periods of time. They are constantly working around individuals that are from different places, different countries, different cultures, so they are challenged to find common ground and gain a better understanding of each other to aid in accomplishing common goals. Working within a team environment shows the individual athletes that they cannot win alone. They are relying on each other for success, and to get there they must know how to be there for each other, how to support one another, how to be accountable, and how to work through conflict. Many see their teammates as family. There is evidence to support that intercollegiate athletics is an environment where there is meaningful involvement.

In this study, no one stated that they did not grow or learn from participating in intercollegiate athletics. Most of the participants addressed how they grew from this team

environment and how meaningful it is. Dugan and Komives (2007) suggested that students must work with others to truly learn leadership, and that being involved can develop intake processes that promote identity development, meaningful involvement, and membership persistence.

Many of the participants discussed how they were challenged by the relationships with their teammates. They also felt a reliance on each other to succeed. Piper discussed how the relationships with her teammates taught her that she can go further than she ever has in her sport. Others spoke of how much their teammates have meant to their experience. Presley feels support from them in all ways. Sharon discussed how even though there are some tough moments, being involved in a team helps her get through those tough moments. She appreciates that there are others around her who are going through similar experiences.

June feels that she is part of a community, where everyone is relying on each other to keep the team together as a whole. This has been very meaningful for her. The coaches have shown them how each person is a part of the whole and should count on each other. It makes them feel valued in their roles, appreciate their differences, and find solutions to become more successful. In Image 5 of the photo elicitation, an athlete is running with her arms out at her sides and has a look of happiness on her face. A few of the participants knew the athlete in the photo and the context of it. They stated that she just scored a goal and was looking towards her teammates as she shares in all her accomplishments with them because she knows she cannot be successful without them.

These student-athletes are around their teammates every day and are a part of a team for extended periods of time. They are always working with individuals that are different than them, so that creates challenges that add meaning when they can work through those moments. They need one another to succeed at their sport, so they cannot exist in this environment without

getting involved in the process. Komives et al. (2005) stated that experiences that include involvement can be the training ground where leadership identity evolved. Based on the feedback from the participants, intercollegiate athletics provides that training ground for the leader identity to develop.

According to Komives et al. (2005), reflective learning is a dimension in the developmental influences where there are opportunities to critically reflect, allowing students to uncover their integrity, passions, commitment to continuous learning and self-assessment. Reflection could include journaling or having meaningful conversations. Students also can have experiences in which they intentionally learn about leadership through training, retreats, and classes. This can give them new language and ideas to which adds to their development (Komives et al., 2005). Intercollegiate athletics creates so many situations where reflective learning takes place. According to Komives et al. (2005), this includes opportunities to critically reflect. During this time, they can self-assess and they are learning. Reflective learning occurs from relationships, competitions, injuries, team conflict, and other athletic experiences. According to the feedback from the research participants, there is strong evidence to suggest intercollegiate athletics is an environment where reflective learning takes place. It happens through relationships, because of the environment itself, and with self.

Athletes are constantly working on relationships with others, whether it is with their teammates or their coaches. These athletes have different personalities, beliefs, ways they work and problem-solve, and communicate. Many of the participants have had to step back and think about a better way to communicate to get the best out of other teammates. Piper discussed how she doesn't have the greatest relationships with some of her team members, so she must be sure

she thinks about the best way to address them to be effective. She tries to put herself in their shoes mentally, and then will decide how to handle the situations.

Team conflict can occur often, and it can get in the way of a team's success if it is not dealt with. That responsibility falls on the athletes many times, so that the coach does not have to focus on that. Sharon discussed how being involved in intercollegiate athletics has challenged her to grow as a leader and find ways to communicate better with her teammates so that they can resolve their differences.

Competitions are a major experience in the lives of student-athletes that leads to critical reflection. There is so much pressure to do well both individually and as a team. Piper talked about how she has had to go back after competitions and think about how she approached her opponent and if she could have done things better. Jane discussed how her team had a tough season because their focus was on the wrong things. They have since worked on evaluating what they could have done better and what will get them on a more successful track.

Other experiences will lead to reflective learning, such as teammates not giving their best efforts. Jane recalled a time when she witnessed a teammate being lazy during workouts. It caused them to have to do more training. Afterward, she was very frustrated with herself for not stepping up and speaking to the athlete about it. She feels it is her responsibility to make sure everyone is on the same page as it is the only way the team will progress.

Lauren mentioned how she did not perform up to her own expectations in her first year. She reflected a lot on herself to see what she could do better. She realized that some of her training needed to change and worked with her coach to accomplish what he wanted out of the workouts, but also modify them some to meet her needs. In the end, she made major gains the next season.

Based on the feedback from the research participants, reflection happens constantly. It can be about themselves, their performances, the way they handle others, and the way they are approaching competition. If they are not reflecting, they are not learning and growing. This process happens from the time they step on campus, and continues throughout their entire careers as intercollegiate athletes as teams and roles are constantly changing from year to year.

Reflective learning does not mean that change always needs to happen, but often, the student-athletes are realizing better ways of handling themselves as well as others. They are also realizing that there are more effective ways to handle their experiences. Meaningful involvement and reflective learning are happening simultaneously. As the student-athletes are reflecting on their experiences, they are making meaning about being involved in intercollegiate athletics and all that it entails. This follows Erikson's (1968) assertion that people discover their identities within a social context, and this is done through a continual process of observation and reflection.

Research Question 3

The third research question dealt with the actual processes involved with participation in intercollegiate athletics and the affect they may have on leadership identity development. *What are the actual processes of being a female student-athlete that contribute to this leadership identity development?* Duderstadt (2003, p. 189) stated that "Values of character, such as dedication, sacrifice, teamwork, integrity, and leadership can be learned on the field, both from coaches dedicated to their teaching roles and from the experiences of athletic competition itself." Dugan and Komives (2007) found that students must work with others to truly learn leadership, and that being involved can develop in-take processes that promote identity development, meaningful involvement, and membership persistence. In addition to the presence of Komives et

al.'s (2005) developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) that are impacting the female student-athlete in their leadership identity development, the processes of being a female intercollegiate student-athlete contribute to this leadership identity development. These processes are the things that exist and are required of you because of simply being on a team competing at the D1 level in intercollegiate athletics.

There are many types of processes that are a part of a student-athlete's life while participating on a team in college. These processes include participating in meaningful relationships, managing conflict, problem-solving, dealing with time management, exercising self-discipline, being accountable to others, managing stress, and working in a challenging and competitive environment. Based on the data gathered from the research participants, there is strong evidence that the processes the female intercollegiate student-athletes experience participating in intercollegiate athletics encourage leadership identity development. All ten participants felt the process of being an intercollegiate athlete contributed to their leadership growth.

Image 1 from the photo elicitation shows a basketball player surrounded by four opposing players. Some participants felt she had a look of determination and focus, while others felt she looked fearful. No matter, she has no other teammates right near her and she must figure out what to do in this pressure situation. Intercollegiate athletics puts student-athletes in pressure-filled situations that require them to step up, make decisions, and act upon them. Isabella talked about that pressure. Her position on the team requires leadership, so she has grown in many ways to be the best leader she can. Managing losses challenged Presley to become better at handling those situations and helping her team to overcome.

Participating on a team where the athletes are thrust into each other's lives, having to work together for common goals, can be challenging to an individual. Isabella talked about how there is conflict at times and she should handle it head-on. The problems will not go away, and they can hinder the success of the team. Because of the team environment, Sharon and Riley feel they should be accountable to one another. When others are counting on you, it causes you to push yourself.

Piper and Kendall felt that just being an athlete and all that it entails pushes them to be better and better, as well as puts you in a position to be a leader in some way to succeed in your sport. Being an intercollegiate athlete has made Caroline more independent and tougher because of being far away from home and having to take care of her teammates. The process of being an intercollegiate athlete requires them to have great time management skills. Sharon talked about how she has been challenged to be a better student, as well as athlete, because of having to balance it all. Lauren talked about how being an intercollegiate athlete and all that it requires has given her more confidence.

The processes involved with being an intercollegiate student-athlete, such as managing self and others, motivating and guiding self and others, balancing athletics and academics, having to work together for common goals, and being thrust into competitive and challenging environments have encouraged leadership development. It is a very unique environment and would be difficult not to experience growth as an individual. In this study specifically, there is strong support that the processes of being a student-athlete contributes to leadership identity growth and the processes have been identified.

Conclusion

Obviously, each of these participating student-athletes has had their own individual experiences throughout their years competing as an intercollegiate athlete. However, it appears that there are consistencies showing that in this environment the processes they go through daily, the relationships they form and manage, and the developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) that are present through their experiences, are impacting growth in their leadership identity. What was intriguing was that many times the growth came not because of easy experiences, but more from the challenging situations and environments.

With a clearer understanding of each of the participant's intercollegiate experiences and the impact of the individuals they are in contact with, leaders within athletic departments can truly understand the importance of the environment they are putting these intercollegiate student-athletes in. They can use the information to not only instruct coaches on best practices regarding leading teams and individual athletes, but also can share with all athletes the impact they have on each other and their growth. They can teach these student-athletes best practices when managing self and others regarding conflict, character, composure, confidence, and commitment within their teams.

Implications for Future Research

There is research showing connections with identity development, leadership development, and intercollegiate athletics. Komives et al. (2005) identifies a Leadership Identity Development (LID) model, based on Komives et al.'s (2005) grounded theory on leadership identity development in students. It shows how an individual's leadership identity is developed through stages and with specific developmental influences. There is not a clear, precise,

theoretical framework or model in which leadership development is determined, and there is not systematic approach to the study of leadership development in athletics (Mumford, Marks, Connelley, Zaccaro & Reiter-Palmon, 2000). The LID model, based on the grounded theory, provides a clear picture of how a leadership identity is developed, and it can be used to conduct research to identify specific applications of the LID model. Komives et al. (2009) provides suggestions for applying the LID theory, so that it may lead to further research studies that seek to explore these observations further.

This research study is qualitative in nature, which “is designed to reveal a target audience’s range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues” (QRCA, 2015, para. 1). Qualitative research is descriptive and includes in-depth studies of individuals or small groups of people to guide or support the building of hypotheses. This case study is no different in that it describes only the experience of female intercollegiate athletics and the leadership identity development of intercollegiate student-athletes enrolled at mid-south, mid-size public metropolitan university.

By studying the experiences of and influences on intercollegiate female student-athletes through a qualitative case study, a better understanding can be gained of how their leadership identity develops. Charbonneau, Barling, and Keloway (2006) found that while coaches are formal leaders, many fail to recognize the mostly informal development of leaders within a team. This study’s outcome can contribute to evidence based research related to leadership identity development in intercollegiate student-athletes. With this information, it will help clarify what influences impact a student-athlete’s leadership identity development, as well as the specific experiences that impact a student-athlete’s leadership identity development. In addition, this study’s outcome could aid in the development of student-athlete’s leadership programs within

intercollegiate athletic programs. There are not many leadership programs within athletic departments currently; however, more athletic departments are hiring a life skills director to implement community service projects, life skills development, and leadership skill development within the student-athletes. The outcome of this study can influence what information is taught in those leadership programs, as well as how it is shared and applied.

The researcher feels that future studies could include male athletes, to determine if there are differences in the leadership growth between males and females. There could be studies conducted that include more athletes in general. The researcher only used participants who were not participating in revenue-generating sports. Future research should include athletes from revenue-generating sports, and even compare the two groups. The research could also compare non-athletes to athletes. The research should also be expanded to a larger number of participants so that the research can be generalized. Continued research related to impact of intercollegiate athletics is needed, and this research could eventually lead to new theories regarding both the impact of intercollegiate athletics, as well as leadership development.

The purpose of this research study was to examine the influence of intercollegiate athletics on the leadership identity development of female intercollegiate athletics. This examination was supported by the theoretical framework of Komives et al. (2005) Leadership Identity Developmental (LID) model. It was determined that intercollegiate athletics creates an environment that supports leadership identity development. Therefore, the LID model can be applied not only to organizational settings such as fraternities and sororities, but also to intercollegiate athletics.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

The research questions that will serve as a guide for this study are: 1) How do the relationships formed through participation in intercollegiate athletics contribute to leadership identity development of the female student-athlete? 2) How do the four developmental influences (peer influence, adult influence, reflective learning, and meaningful involvement) affect the female student-athlete in leadership identity development? and 3) What are the processes of being a female student-athlete that contribute to this leadership identity development?

Interview Questions:

1. How long have you participated in intercollegiate athletics?
2. How has being involved in intercollegiate athletics influenced growth in your life?
3. How have your peers on your team influenced growth in your life?
4. What experiences have you had as an intercollegiate athlete that have caused you to experience reflective learning? Reflective learning can be defined as any situation, conflict, competition, etc. that causes you to think about the situation or occurrence and learn from it.
5. What does it mean to you to be involved with your team and in intercollegiate athletics?
6. How have adults, such as coaches or athletic administrators impacted your leadership development?
7. What does leadership mean to you?
8. What experiences have you had as an intercollegiate athlete that have impacted your ability to be a leader?

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

1. Why did you decide to become a Division 1 athlete?
2. How have you changed since joining the team?
3. What have you learned about relating to other people?
4. What have you learned about leaders because of your involvement in Division 1 Athletics?
5. Are leadership experiences (roles, opportunities, definitions?) in athletics different than other experiences? If so, how?
6. Is the term “leadership” defined differently in the context of athletics than other types of involvement?
7. Have you seen leadership growth in other athletes or teammates? If so, please explain.
8. What has been your most significant roles or experiences for learning about leaders through your involvement in your team/athletics?

Appendix C

Focus Group Photo Elicitation

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



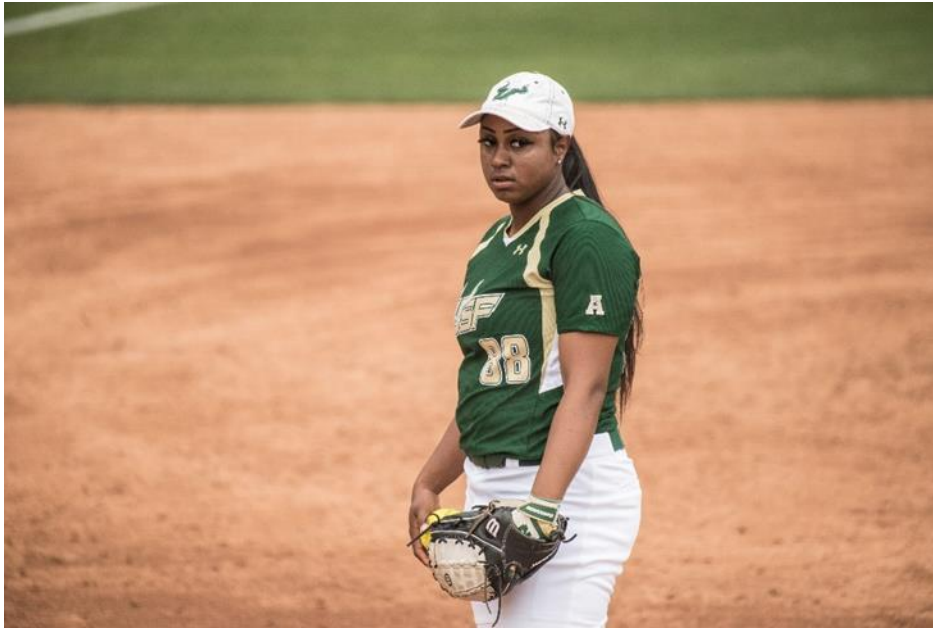
Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Appendix D

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear _____,

My name is Natalie Poole. I am conducting a research study entitled “Leadership Identity Development in Female Intercollegiate Student-Athletes.” The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experiences you have as a female student-athlete, as well as the influences you encounter, to determine if they impact your leadership identity development. The study will include two, one-on-one semi-structured interviews that will be approximately one hour each in length and at a location of your choosing.

The reason I am reaching out to you is that were identified as a potential participant by the coaches of your sport who worked with you on a daily basis and could recommend you based on the following criteria:

- (1) Have been involved in intercollegiate athletes at this university for at least one year;
- (2) Work inclusively with others, demonstrating consciousness of group process, empowering themselves and others to heightened involvement;
- (3) Demonstrated commitment to ethical processes and are able to work to common purposes;
- (4) Having demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership education and exhibited similar behavior as represented in the LID model.

The information obtained from you will remain confidential, and in the final report of the research study, there will be no identifiers that will link your name to the data. Subjects do not receive any economic or other incentives for participation in this study. There are no specific benefits that the individual participants will receive.

By studying the experiences of and influences on intercollegiate female student-athletes, a better understanding can be gained of how your leadership identity develops. This study's outcome can contribute to evidence based research related to leadership identity development in intercollegiate student-athletes. With this information, it will help clarify what influences impact a female student-athlete's leadership identity development, as well as the specific experiences that impact a female student-athlete's leadership identity development. In addition, this study's outcome could aid in the development of student-athlete's leadership programs within intercollegiate athletic programs. There are not many leadership programs within athletic departments currently, however, more athletic departments are hiring a life skills director to implement community service projects, life skills development, and leadership skill development within the student-athletes. The outcome of this study can influence what information is taught in those leadership programs, as well as how it is shared and applied.

If you would be willing to participate in this study, please email me back with the best way to contact you moving forward. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Natalie Poole

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN INTERCOLLEGIATE FEMALE STUDENT ATHLETES: A CASE STUDY

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the leadership identity development in female intercollegiate student-athletes. You are being invited to take part in this research study because your sport coach identified you as a student-athlete that meets the following criteria: (1) Have been involved in intercollegiate athletes at this university for at least one year; (2) Work inclusively with others, demonstrating consciousness of group process, empowering themselves and others to heightened involvement; (3) Demonstrated commitment to ethical processes and are able to work to common purposes; and (4) Having demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership education and exhibited similar behavior as represented in the LID model. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about eight people to do so at the University of Memphis.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

The person in charge of this study is Natalie Poole, Head Softball Coach of University of Memphis Department of Athletics. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Jeff Wilson, who can be reached at jlwlson4@memphis.edu.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

A female develops differently than a man does, and each experience leadership in a different way. Most research conducted on leadership has focused on the coach or the male athlete. There needs to be more diverse research that includes the female leadership identity development, and more specifically the female student-athlete. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of and influences on female student-athlete's leadership identity development. Gaining a better understanding of these experiences will clarify the significant influences that lead to leadership identity development. By exploring the possible influences on the leadership identity development of these female student-athletes, as well as their experiences, we might also gain a better understanding of the attributes, behaviors, and relational approaches of those individuals seen as leaders.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The research procedures will be conducted at the choice of the participant for the two semi-structured interviews. Each of those visits will take about one hour in length. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is two hours over the next three months. The interviews will be one-on-one, which will aid in keeping to confidentiality standards.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

As a participant, you will be asked to answer questions about experiences you have had as a student-athlete that have encouraged reflective thinking and meaningful involvement. As a participant, you will also be asked about potential influences you have come into contact with throughout your time as a female intercollegiate student-athlete, such as administrators, coaches, and peers. The semi-structured interviews will be voice recorded to ensure accuracy of information gathered by all parties.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

To the best of my knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. However, some people have experienced a better awareness of their experiences and those who are potential influences in their lives during their time as a student-athlete when they answer the questions or read their responses at the conclusion of the study. Your willingness to take part, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand this research topic.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

I will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When I write about the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. I may publish the results of this study; however, I will keep your name and other identifying information private. The data that will be collected will be kept in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have access to. When the information is coded into an electronic version, there will be no identifier that can connect the information to you, the participant. Once the research study has completed, the original data collected will be destroyed to protect confidentiality permanently.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, at 901-484-6721 or

natalie.poole@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT IF NEW INFORMATION IS LEARNED DURING THE STUDY THAT MIGHT AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE?

If the researcher learns of new information regarding this study, and it might change your willingness to stay in this study, the information will be provided to you. You may be asked to sign a new informed consent form if the information is provided to you after you have joined the study.

As a reassurance, in the final report of this research study, there will be no identifying information associated with your responses. Pseudonyms will be used to maintain the privacy of any identifying information related to participants.

WHAT DO YOU DO ONCE YOU HAVE DECIDED WHETHER YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY?

If you have decided to participate in this study, please email me at natalie.poole@memphis.edu.

You will need to sign this informed consent form and return it to me. Then, I will sign it and return a copy to you for your records. After the informed consent has been signed by both parties, we can schedule a time and date that is convenient to you to begin the interview process.

If you are not interested in participating in this study, please email me to confirm that you do not want me to follow up with you.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent

Date

Appendix F

Permission to Conduct Research

Hello,

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed and approved your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

PI NAME: Patricia Tobbe

CO-PI:

PROJECT TITLE: Leadership Identity Development in Intercollegiate Female Student Athletes: A Case Study

FACULTY ADVISOR NAME (if applicable): Jeffery Wilson

IRB ID: #4214

APPROVAL DATE: 6/3/2016

EXPIRATION DATE: 6/3/2017

LEVEL OF REVIEW: Expedited

Please Note: Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

- 1. If this IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.**
- 2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be completed and sent to the board.**

- 3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval, whether the approved protocol was reviewed at the Exempt, Expedited or Full Board level.**
- 4. Exempt approval are considered to have no expiration date and no further review is necessary unless the protocol needs modification.**

Approval of this project is given with the following special obligations:

Thank you,

James P. Whelan, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chair

The University of Memphis.

Note: Review outcomes will be communicated to the email address on file. This email should be considered an official communication from the UM IRB.